VOLUME 2 JULY 99 ISSUE 4

NEW AGE GAMING SOUTH AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA'S OWN PC AND PLAYSTATION GAMING MAGAZINE

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STAR WARS
EPISODE I
RACER

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E3 Tribune SPECIAL INSERT

NAG's exclusive guide to upcoming 99/2000 releases

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ED's Note

Only in Hollywood

Flying overseas is fun, sitting on a plane for 11 hours, twice, isn't. Seeing Hollywood is an unforgettable experience, walking on it's pavements for hours isn't. My trip to E3 heralds a pinnacle in my life as an avid game player, you simply can't beat it. But nothing could have prepared me for what was to come. It's only when you're standing in the middle of a football stadium sized hall surrounded by thousands of gamers, basking in the glow of hundreds of computer screens do you realise just how big computer gaming has become. Be it Pentiums, consoles, monkeys from the future or jedi knights, if it could be played or tied into a game it was there and all this splendour smack bang in the middle of Hollywood, Los Angeles. You'll be surprised (unless you read the cover) to notice that we've thrown in an entire extra section on E3 and all the major games coming for the next year. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed putting it together, just remember to keep it for future reference - we're unofficially calling it the Gaming Bible for 1999.

This gaming thing is getting big - almost out of hand the prudent or protectors of culture might say. If you consider all the bad press games have received in the past few months over those high school killings, the number of PlayStation consoles sold world wide and the millions of people playing games you have to wonder were it's going. Did anyone think where it would all end one day while programming those first few tentative lines of code for space invaders! Not thinking of future consequences is how the millennium bug problem all started. There is little doubt that gaming has a big place in the future and this was well consolidated by keynote speaker Don Tapscott at the opening ceremony, who speculated on a number of interesting topics including the all-important 'play value' of a game. His speech was somewhat directed towards us journalists, highlighting our important role in bringing the news to our readers and telling them what represents good play value in a title. This is now where we find ourselves, at the brink of something bigger than anyone can imagine. Gaming magazines have an important role in the future, an educational role, a new service role and most importantly an entertainment role. What is the point of doing anything if you can't have a little fun in the process?

Statue Stature

Another surprising discovery at E3 was the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences. This organisation was established a while ago, and already has one successful awards ceremony under their belt. You'll notice the name bears a similar style to the Academy Awards. What are we saying here, will the Academy Awards of gaming ever reach the status of the movie stars? Don't laugh, E3 was held in Hollywood this year, and isn't going to move for the next five years. Where will it all end is a hard question to answer, all I can say is that if things move along at this pace, gaming might just start getting bigger than cultural staples like television. Interacting with something is always going to be better than observing it. Well there it is, the future - doesn't it look good?

Michael James, Editor

Footnote

As you might or might not have noticed by now, we've hired a new face. This face comes with a name and that name is Walter Pretorius, writing as Shryke within these hallowed pages. Walter will be doing large portions of the layout of the magazine as well as adding his numerous talents to our crack team of gaming experts. We really threw him into the deep end this issue and after a hectic initiation period he's still married and didn't sink, probably that air filled head of his. So, if you spot any strange colour combinations or errant lines you know who to blame, I can only control so mischief my domain!

16 Free Pages!

In case you're wondering, our trip to E3 is also going to benifit you this month... How you might ask? Well if you rummage through your pile of NAG goodies this month you'll discover an entire separate insert on this auspicious event called the E3 Tribune. Enjoy it and remember to keep it, because you'll be seeing all those great games in up-coming issues.

New Age Gaming
South Africa's own Gaming Magazine
An
Unreal Design FX
Initiative

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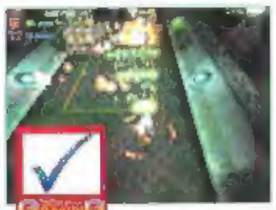
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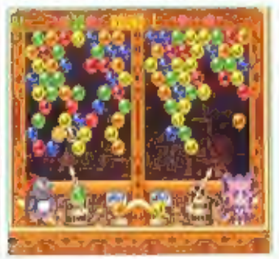
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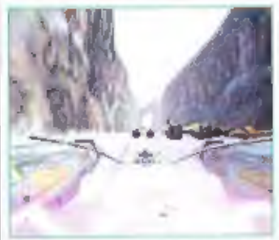
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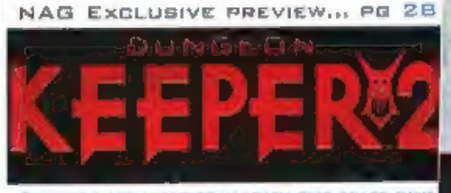

Bullfrog are about to unleash this killer game and we bagged the rolling head...

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VAMPIRE THE MASQUERADE

www4.activision.com/games/vampire

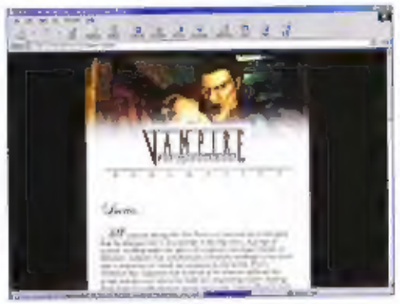
Those people that have played the role playing game first published by White Wolf Publishing almost a decade ago await the appearance of Vampire: The Masquerade – Redemption on PC with bated breath. Recreating the rich and convoluted world of Vampires on the desktop will be impossible, many claim, but if the official site is anything to go by, developers Nihilistic have done a bang up job. Reaching this site is possible through Activision's official web site at www.activision.com and following the link in the game title drop down box.

Because this game is still in its virtual infancy, the site is rather small. It is made up of two letters, from one Vampire to another, detailing what is described as a "breach of the masquerade", in the form of a new computer game (the Masquerade, for those who are not familiar with Vampire: The Masquerade, is a code of conduct that keeps the Vampires living in human society hidden from prying mortal eyes – a breach would reveal them to the world, with disastrous consequences.) These correspondences mainly deal with the most basic elements of the game and focus of Nihilistic and their work in building this complex game.

Little more is available on this site, save for early screen shots from what looks to be a stunning release, a list of awards that the game has already won, and several articles surrounding the game. And, of course, a download option that contains all the logos, fonts and data necessary to set up an "official" fan site. Unfortunately, many visitors to the site, who have not experienced the thrill of the non-PC role playing game, may feel a little lost with the terminology used within the two letters. Thankfully, a convenient link to www.white-wolf.com, the home of White Wolf Publishing's official web site is available on this site. At the White Wolf site, visitors can research the Vampire: The Masquerade role playing game through a series of FAQs and articles, and may even download a set of "quick start" rules to experience the magic of the role playing game first hand. Not a bad idea, if you want to fully appreciate what promises to be one of the best PC releases for this year!

Further research into the role playing game can be done at one of several fan sites. Vampire: The Masquerade can be found all over the World Wide Web. Simply running a search on Vampire: The Masquerade will reveal tons of possibilities for research, reading and information.

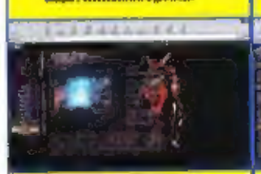
NAG



NAG's WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

NAG's Favourite Websites of the Month

http://www.bullfrog.co.uk



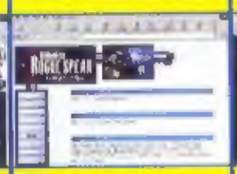
It seems that everyone has been waiting for Dungeon Keeper 2. As a result, Bullfrog EA have made sure that they beat the rush by having a dedicated section set up for Horny and his cronies on the official Bullfrog EA website. Just surf your way to www.bullfrog.co.uk, and follow the links. Be warned – you will need Macromedia Shockwave to view the site. As a site, this is something to behold. The use of Shockwave technology has resulted in a site full of life. Animations longantly change and materialise with unparalleled smoothness as you peruse the useful information contained on this web gem, with the odd game sound effect thrown in for good measure.

A link from the initial page leads to the DK2 guided tour – complete with the irrepressible Horny as your tour guide. Said tour guides the visitor through the basic concept of the game, giving a rough overview of what Dungeon Keeper 2 is all about, along with some excellent in game screen shots. Further links from the main menu include visuals, game info, online play, downloads, support and other options. A veritable treasure trove for DK2 players!

http://www.wheeloftime.com

Situated at www.wheeloftime.com, the official wheel of time website is a brilliant resource for players of this game. This attractive web site is still mainly dedicated to the development of this game based upon Robert Jordan's best selling fantasy novel series. However, it is one of the most complete development sites we have ever seen. Everything about this action strategy game can be found here, including several forums, information about the original novels, and details of the Unreal Engine, which is used by the game. Paying a visit to the Images section of the site will prove informative. A short but thorough discussion of graphic construction leads the link off, followed by a large number of screen shots of locations, characters and editors. This is one site that definitely enhances the game itself – the information held here will certainly thrill players of this 3D fantasy game.

http://www.red-storm.com



Slated for release in September of this year, Rogue Spear expands on the 3rd person action game, Rainbow Six. This much-awaited sequel is well represented on the Internet, at the official website www.redstorm.com/rogue_spear/. Here, fans of the game can see exactly what developers Red Storm have in store for them with this new work from spy thriller master, Tom Clancy. This site is a treasure trove of information concerning the game, including news, update diaries, weapon listings and screen shots. It would seem that some forethought has gone into the design of the site, too, with the inclusion of download and support buttons (neither of which work yet). For those who don't know Rainbow Six, a back story link has also been added, just to make sure that everyone visiting the site is up to speed with what's going on. An interesting section of the site is the Rogue Spear Retreat, where submissions from fans including mods, artwork and databases can be downloaded.

http://www.planescape-torment.com

Advanced Dungeons and Dragons is the grand daddy of all role playing games, and Planescape is one of the most popular settings within it. Following on the success of Baldur's Gate, Black Isle Studios have once again teamed up with TSR, the creators of AD&D, to bring Planescape: Torment to the fore.

This Shockwave developer site introduces gamers to the strange realm that is Planescape. Here, guided tours introduce newcomers to this unusual and enthralling world. Players can learn about the various political factions that occur in the central, hub-like city of Sigil, or perhaps download screen shots and sound bytes taken from the game. Full developer diaries are available to the visitor, as are surveys, links to press and fan sites, and even a guide to the strange slang used in the Outer Planes. All this and more can be found at www.planescape-torment.com.

http://www.playstation.co.za

Our local Sony Playstation website is brimming with sound effects and Shockwave animations, and is visually quite an impressive site for sight, if you prefer). Links on the page's site map will lead you to an interesting review of the Playstation 2 (in the news section), to the merchandise section, where you can purchase all the necessary Playstation gear and even an online purchasing page, where you can buy your Playstation titles electronically.

Other links include cheat codes, product listings, top 10 lists and product previews. This site is a wonderful resource for Playstation gamers. It sets the world of Playstation at your fingertips, with a useful local slant that fills the visitor in on exactly what's going on with Playstation in South Africa. This is, of course, invaluable, as information regarding release dates and product availability are directly related to our market.

Check it out at www.playstation.co.za.

3Dfx set to acquire S3

According to a number of different sources, 3Dfx is set to acquire S3. All the money for this deal is said to be coming from a consortium interested in the S3 patents. If the deal does go down, all reports are saying it will be a hostile bid. S3 is being wooed by Intel and last month received a $42 million bonus from UMC for certain license agreements. Unfortunately 3Dfx and S3 would not

In space no one can download the patch

The great save game debate raises its head again, regarding the issue of whether or not game players should be able to save their progress halfway through a level or not. The game that sparked off this argument is the hot first person shooter, Alien vs. Predator, from publishers and developers Fox Interactive and Rebellion. After massive consumer input and pressure the developers have coded a patch that allows you to save your game at any point during the intense levels. The patch will be available for the PC on the Fox Interactive web site.

The death of DIVX

As many people know, the fate of new technology is only ever decided by one entity, the consumer. Digital Video Express said it was ditching its DIVX video players, which use disposable digital versatile discs. The demise is primarily blamed on a lack of support from movie studios and retailers. DIVX discs are based on DVD technology, but are encoded so they can only be played on DIVX enhanced machines. A regular DVD can be played as many times as a consumer wants but the cheaper DIVX based discs become useless after 48 hours of viewing. After that, users could throw them away or buy more viewing time. DIVX, which arrived on the scene last September has not had it easy as rival electronics retailers refused to supply the devices and movie studios shied away from yet another rival to the video cassette. Analysts said what ended DIVX was its failure to offer a big enough improvement over existing technologies, such as videocassettes or even DVD. DIVX supporters enjoyed not having to return discs after renting them but users were apparently turned off by the extra steps to activate their players, which involved plugging the machines into a phone line. Consumers who paid extra for DVD machines with DIVX features were offered a rebate.

Microsoft licenses EAX for DirectX

In a recent licensing agreement with Creative Technology, Microsoft has acquired a number of recording studio quality sound effects found in Creative's Environmental Audio Extensions. This allows for developers to add environmental sound effects to 3D games. Some of the licensed effects include flange, chorus, EQ and environmental reverberation. Microsoft plans to incorporate these EAX effects into their next version of the DirectX API. Creative already has the market sewn up with their audio system and the EAX API is already supported by over 50 PC games.

10 Million Joins

Game developer and publisher, NovaLogic has announced that NovaWorld, an on-line gaming service, has achieved more than 10 million game joins since the middle of December 1998. This total has been boosted by the companies latest air combat simulation F-22 Lightning 3 and its Voice-Over-Net technology. NovaWorld is a free service that lets gamers go head-to-head against or participate in co-operative missions with people around the world. The real time voice component lets players communicate with each other verbally and eliminates the need to type messages to other players. All of NovaLogic's new releases will feature NovaWorld support and Voice-Over-Net technology. The sad thing here is that with our limited bandwidth and poor Internet performance, these innovations from NovaLogic will go largely unnoticed in our country.

3Dfx and InterAct accessories in bed

InterAct Accessories has announced plans to launch a series of co-branded peripherals for multimedia computers powered by graphics accelerators from 3Dfx. The first two products on offer are The Hammerhead FX and The FX Racing Wheel. The Hammerhead is the first range of products include a game pad and racing controller. The game pad, The Hammerhead FX is the first vibration game pad for the PC and features internal vibration motors, four-axis control, eight-way digital direction pad, ten programmable buttons and will be bundled with Interplay's Descent 3: Sol Ascent. The FX Racing Wheel is programmable, has a throttle control trigger and six buttons in a compact and sturdy design, it also features vibration effects. Both products will ship with InterAct's new Game Profiler, which enables players to save their favourite effects, button configurations and

Dreamcast setting records

The Dreamcast will be available in more than 15 000 retails stores on its launch date with close to 1500 consumers lining up to place pre-orders on a daily basis. The Dreamcast might not see the light of day on our shores though but with figures like this you have to wonder if anyone will pick up the license here in South Africa. As this pace the Dreamcast is set for the biggest launch in the history of video games. Sega's pre-order campaign has already over shadowed Sony's in 1995 with the PlayStation only reaching 100 000 pre-orders prior to their US launch. Customers wanting to try before they buy will have access to over 6000 interactive product stands at retail level. What is helping this massive demand is that you're getting a 56K modem and around four times the processing power of a Pentium II chip for your $199. Another important thing to remember is that the Dreamcast will be the only new video game system on the market during the money mad Christmas period, which will guarantee massive sales. For the launch the system will have a total of 15 games available with the number growing to 30 by December and the on to 100 by the end of 2000. The console's 128-Bit architecture allows it to grow and change to match advances in technology, something the PC is well suited for. Besides everything the console features a revolutionary Visual Memory Unit that allows players to swap games with friends in the home, arcade or head-to-head using to of these units.

GTA Expanding

Owners of the digitally violent, Grand Theft Auto: London 1969 will be able to download a free upgrade for their game later this year. This expansion pack, GTA: London 1961 will feature new missions and content for this fun title. The developers, Rockstar Games have quickly realised how they can use the Internet to expand their game and offer a little more value for money months after the original purchase.

Half-Life Chronicles

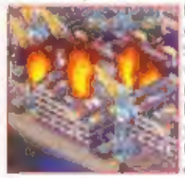
Radioactive Software will be releasing a new single player modification for Half-Life called Chronicles. The modification features a series of mini-solo missions downloadable over the Internet. The missions will consist of 3 to 15 small map files each and draw on alternate scenarios to the games original universe. The first episode should be up on their site by the time you read this. Pull out your mouse and browse on over to www.radioactivesoftware.com for more details.

Prince of Persia test

SSI's Beta Test Central has posted an on-line beta testing application for its upcoming third person action adventure game, *Prince of Persia 3D*. According to Beta Test Central the beta testing is anticipated to begin in July. In this first 3D version of the classic series, the hero prince must set out on a perilous journey to rescue his bride and avenge the death of the Sultan. The game combines the fast-paced combat of a fighting game with the depth and challenge of an adventure title. You can have a look at www.betatestcentral.com for more information.

SimCity 3000 hits 1 million

Electronic Arts has shipped more than one million copies of their highly successful city building and management title, SimCity 3000 world wide. The game is an instant success and has sold out more this year than any other title. In their continued service to their customers, Maxis, the developers have been putting various game add-ons and dedicated sections up on their web site. The most recent addition is the City Exchange, a trading post where users can upload and download their favourite creations. Once uploaded, players can see if their cities rate among the best or worst in a number of areas including traffic, crime and pollution. Since the site went up over 2500 cities have been posted. There have also been numerous additions to the game's collection of historic structures, famous cities and maps. If you own this game and are connected to the Internet then http://www.simcity.com is the place to be.



Hasbro Interactive into sports

Software published, Hasbro Interactive announced the formation of Hasbro Sports, allowing them to compete in this lucrative market. Hasbro already has an impressive portfolio and is one of the companies that has brought computer gaming to where it is today. "Hasbro Sports will develop games across all categories of the interactive business, including action, children's titles, family, strategy and simulation," said Hasbro Interactive president Tom Dusenberry. The first few titles should be in store soon with more following next year.

Creative Labs and Creative Technology sued by 3Dfx

With the kind of money the computer industry is generating it's little wonder that so many of these 'disagreements' end up in court. In this particular case 3Dfx had filed suit against Creative Labs and Creative Technology for the Northern District of California over copy infringement and breach of contract. By incorporating Glide source code into Unified, 3Dfx is saying that Creative breached a licensing agreement and infringed 3Dfx copyrights. Unified is a recently announced technology designed to run Glide-only software titles on Creative TNT and TNT2 based graphics accelerator cards. The license agreement in question prohibits the use and modification of any 3Dfx source code to operate with non-3Dfx technology. Besides the altered source code there is also an unresolved issue of money. 3Dfx claims that Creative Technology owes them money. The Glide API was developed by 3Dfx Interactive to provide a simple and fast method for developers to write 3D game titles and software specifically to run on 3Dfx.

Unreal performance

Programmer for Epic Games, Tim Sweeney has reported that Unreal's Direct3D performance and stability have 'increased significantly' since the last version. This includes the RIVA TNT, TNT 2, Matrox G400 and ATI Rage 128. Although this is good news for owners of these cards, the news isn't too good for people who have the Riva 128, Rage Pro and Permedia 2. The programmer said he managed to find all the problems that led to sever hitching and pausing while playing the game using the Direct3D engine. Improvements include less memory usage, better optimisation for the game's texture usage patterns and new texture management code. There is already another patch on the way and it will be ready when it's done. This should breathe a little life back into Unreal.

BITS & BYTES

Settlers 3 Quest for the Amazons

Blue Byte is preparing to release an upcoming Settlers 3 add-on called Quest for the Amazons. The original game sold more than 500 000 copies around the world, with this total growing everyday. This exciting add-on will include the following improvements and enhancements:

- New video sequences
- 39 new buildings
- Several new landscapes
- 10 new single player maps
- Two new campaigns, each with 12 missions
- Eight new magic spells unique to the Amazon race
- A new thief unit can scout enemy territory and swipe the weapons and gold from foes
- 10 new multiple player maps
- A new level editor
- The Amazon labourers have their own special set of trades and duties

Windows 98 Second Edition

Sony Corporation and subsidiary Sony Computer Entertainment has developed a

Microsoft Windows

laser device for the next generation PlayStation game machine that can read both Digital Video Discs and Compact Discs. This is revolutionary technology that allows a single laser receptor to produce two lasers at different wavelengths, one for each format. This new technology will reduce the overall number of components in CD and DVD drives improving their reliability.

Dark Reign 2

A non-interactive demo for this new RTS title from Pandemic Studios should be available for download soon. This demo is a self-running

test featuring a set of four in-game movies. Pandemic is also setting up a special e-mail address were users can send through their comments on the game. The demo will weigh in at around 7 megabytes and will require a 3D hardware-accelerated system. So keep an eye on www.pandemicstudios.com/dr2/ for further updates on the demo for this exciting title.

Total Annihilation: Kingdoms Demo

After some speculation, rumours and denials Cavedog has confirmed that there will be a

demo for their upcoming release, Total Annihilation: Kingdoms. The game has reportedly gone gold and is due for release later this month. The Real Time Strategy arena has a few top titles slated for release this year and after the success Total Annihilation had, the developers are looking forward to the sales figures next year.

MP3 Music Recorders Approved

The recording industry suffered a major defeat in a federal appeals court when the court ruled that a popular device used to download and store music from the Internet does not violate federal anti-piracy laws. The player in question was the Rio MP300, manufactured by Diamond Multimedia Systems, the court said it does not qualify as a digital audio recording device. The Recording Industry Association of America fears devices such as the Rio will eventually cause a rampant outbreak of piracy via the Internet. The MP3 format allows for rapid downloading of CD quality music off the Internet.

Sony's New Laser

Sony Corporation and subsidiary Sony Computer Entertainment has developed a

PlayStation

laser device for the next generation PlayStation game machine that can read both Digital Video Discs and Compact Discs. This is revolutionary technology that allows a single laser receptor to produce two lasers at different wavelengths, one for each format. This new technology will reduce the overall number of components in CD and DVD drives improving their reliability.

Remote Controlled Fun

Racing fans are in for a treat if they downloaded Acclaim's remote controlled racer,

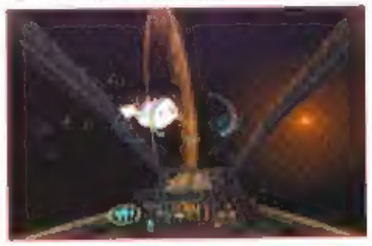
THE RE-VOLT LADDER

Re-Volt - the company has put up an official competition ladder where players can race and post their scores on the site. Re-Volt is a remote controlled car racing game that is set in real life miniture locations. Don't be surprised when you find yourself racing under beds and through the kitchen. Re-Volt is looking good so go and try it out.

Starlancer Screens

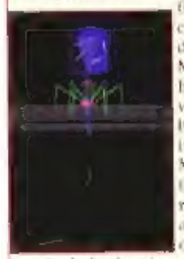
Digital Anvil is a company everyone should start keeping tabs on, primarily due to their stunning upcoming game Freelancer (also our

E3 game of the show.) Freelancer isn't due for at least another 18 months but they are working on another project called Starlancer, their most current game. Starlancer is an action space combat game that promises to better anything we've seen in the past. The game is due for release around the end of the year and is published by Microsoft.



Virus!

More virus trouble with the ExploreZip worm, computer security experts issued warnings against this potentially fatal virus. The virus is spread via e-mail and quickly covered the entire globe overnight, infecting and spreading as it went. The virus can erase



files from a user's computer and is more dangerous than the Melissa virus. The ExploreZip is termed a worm, not a virus because it can't replicate itself. Viruses such as Melissa are written with the capability to reproduce through automation. The spread of this virus was particularly alarming, with incidents doubling overnight and appearances of the virus in Germany, France and the United States. Computer experts speculate that the virus originated in Israel. This bug has a particularly smart way of infecting your machine. It operates under the guise of an e-mail that appears to be a response to one you sent earlier. You'll receive a mail with the message, "I received your e-mail, and I shall reply ASAP. Till then, take a look at the zipped documents." If you open and click on the attached file the virus enters your machine and destroys Microsoft Outlook, and other e-mail programs. In response all of the leading anti-virus software providers have updated their sites, offering protection for a quick download.

Local PC Charts

Position	Name	Last Month	Total Months
1.	World Cup Cricket	New	New
2.	Civilization Call to Power	New	New
3.	Lands of Lore 3	New	New
4.	Myth 2 SoulBlighter	New	New
5.	Starcraft Battlechest	4	6
6.	Age of Empires Gold Edition	Re-entry	Re-entry
7.	Sim City 3000	Re-entry	Re-entry
8.	Superbike World Champs	6	1
9.	Half-life	Re-entry	Re-entry
10	Star City 2000 Classic Edition	9	1

International PC Charts

Position	Name	Developer/Distributor
1.	Alpha Centauri Firaxis	Electronic Arts
2.	Heroes of Might and Magic 3	New World/3DO
3.	Baldur's Gate	Bioware/Interplay
4.	Half-Life	Valve/Sierra
5.	Might and Magic 6	New World/3DO
6.	Starcraft/Add-on	Blizzard
7.	Railroad Tycoon 2	PopTop/G.O.D.
8.	Rollercoaster Tycoon	Microprose
9.	Unreal	Epic Megagames/GT
10.	Thief: The Dark Project	Looking Glass/Eidos

Local PlayStation Charts

Position	Name	Last Month	Total Months
1.	Brian Lara Cricket	6	4
2.	Abes Exodus	New	New
3.	Fifa '99	4	4
4.	Tekken III	1	4
5.	Heart of Darkness	Re-entry	Re-entry
6.	C&C Retaliation	New	New
7.	Metal Gear Solid	New	New
8.	Gran Turismo	10	6
9.	Crash Bandicoot 3	5	4
10	Time Crisis Platinum	New	New

International PlayStation Charts

Position	Name	Developer/Distributor
1.	Metal Gear Solid	Konami
2.	Final Fantasy 8	Square
3.	Gran Turismo	Sony
4.	Syphon Filter	Eidetic/989 Studios
5.	Ridge Racer	NAMCO
6.	Ehrgeiz	Square
7.	Silent Hill	Konami
8.	Tomb Raider 3	Eidos
9.	Sports Car GT	Electronic Arts
10.	Need for Speed (High Stakes)	Electronic Arts

New Age Gaming Price Comparison

Game Title	Incredible Connection	PNA Johannesburg	Toys R Us	Builders
Pro 18 (PSX)	None	R 479.00	R 479.00	R 479.00
Civilization II (PSX)	None	R 499.00	R 499.00	R 499.00
Apocalypse (PSX)	R 289.00	R 429.00	None	None
R-Type (PSX)	None	None	R 429.00	R 429.00
Star Wars Racer (PC)	R 149.00	R 349.00	None	None
Star Wars Phantom Menace (PC)	R 149.00	R 349.00	None	None
Sports Car GT (PC)	R 299.00	R 299.00	None	None
Redguard (PC)	R 299.00	R 299.00	None	None

JUST CHARTS

PC Release List

JULY

01 - Sega Rally Championship - SEGA ENT
01 - Star Trek: Klingon Academy - INTERPLAY
01 - Tonic Trouble - UBI SOFT
12 - Ultimate Collector for Sports Cards
12 - Core Rules 2.0 Expansion
12 - Dragon Magazine Archive
13 - Lander - PSYGNOSIS
15 - Drakan - PSYGNOSIS
18 - Jagged Alliance 2 - TALONSOFT
15 - Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver - EIDOS INT
26 - Darkstone - GATHERING OF DEVELOPERS
26 - FLY! - GATHERING OF DEVELOPERS
26 - Slansky's Table Poker - INTERPLAY
26 - Warhammer Rites of War - MINDSCAPE
29 - West Front Elite Edition - TALONSOFT
29 - Hidden & Dangerous - TALONSOFT

AUGUST

02 - Civilization: Test of Time - MICROPROSE
02 - Outcast - INFOGRAMES
02 - Planescape: Torment - INTERPLAY
02 - Messiah - SHINY
02 - Martyr
02 - Star Trek: Starfleet Command - INTERPLAY
09 - Force 21 - REDSTORM ENTERTAINMENT
10 - Flight Unlimited 3 - ELECTRONIC ARTS
10 - System Shock 2 - ELECTRONIC ARTS
16 - Road to Moscow
20 - Ameri: The Awakening - CAVEDOG
20 - Shadow Man - ACCLAIM
24 - C&C 2: Tiberian Sun - WESTWOOD
24 - Gabriel Knight III - SIERRA ON-LINE
24 - Jane's A-10 Warthog - JANE'S
27 - Operational Art War II - TALONSOFT
30 - Seven Kingdoms II - UBI SOFT
BEGI - Sinistar Unleashed - THQ

PlayStation Release List

JULY

01 - Atlantis - INFOGRAMES
01 - Dragons - INFOGRAMES
01 - Virus - INFOGRAMES
15 - All Star Tennis 99 - UBI SOFT
15 - Echo Night - AGETEC
15 - Monaco GP - UBI SOFT
15 - Shanghai - ELECTROSOURCE
16 - Silhouette Mirage - WORKING DESIGNS
20 - NFL Xtreme 2 - SCEA
20 - Tarzan - SCEA
23 - Black Bass with Blue Marlin - HOT B USA
28 - Jade Cocoon - CRAVE ENTERTAINMENT

AUGUST

02 - R Type Delta - AGETEC
03 - Quake II - ACTIVISION
10 - Konami Arcade Classics - KONAMI
10 - NCAA GameBreaker 2000 - SCEA
10 - Quake II - ACTIVISION
10 - Star Wars Ep I: Phantom Menace - LUCASARTS
16 - Championship Motorcross - THQ
16 - Jet Moto 3 - SCEA
16 - LEGO Rock Raiders - LEGO
16 - Revolt - ACCLAIM
16 - Shadowman - ACCLAIM
16 - Shao Lin - THQ
16 - South Park - ACCLAIM
17 - Um Jammer Lammy - SCEA
20 - 1000 Armis - ALTUS
24 - NFL Blitz 2000 - MIDWAY
24 - Soul of the Samurai - KONAMI
31 - Tiny Tank - SCEA

NEW AGE GAMING TAKES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACCURACY OF THIS INFORMATION. ANY OF THE RELEASE DATES MAY BE CHANGED IF THE DEVELOPER DEEMS IT NECESSARY. THE ONLY OFFICIAL SHIPPING DATE THAT MOST DEVELOPERS GIVE THESE DAYS IS, 'WHEN IT'S DONE!'

NEW AGE GAMING SOUTH AFRICA

PlayStation™ PLATINUM

COMPETITION

Stand a chance to win six Platinum PlayStation titles valued at R1200.00

To walk away with this fabulous prize answer one easy question:

What is the RRP (recommended retail price) of the PSX Platinum series? (Due: Check Bergen Burn)

Send your answers to PSX Platinum Competition, PO Box 2749, Alberton, 1450 or email us at comp@nag.co.za

BACKCHAT

Thank you to everyone who wrote in this month. Unfortunately we cannot reply to all of the letters, but we do read them all. You can send your letters and e-mail to the addresses on the postcard. Please remember to include all your details when you write in or we can't send you your prize should you win. Don't ask us to change your prize or magically convert it into cash. As always, the editors decision is final and that's that.

Well done to **Michael Dewar** who wins our editors choice this month - keep the questions coming. Until next month...

Backchat
PO Box 2749
Alberton
1449

letters@nag.co.za

Exactly half

Firstly I would like to say that you are doing a great job, keep it up. I have but one complaint though, when your magazine first came out your game reviews were about fifty percent PlayStation and fifty percent PC but in the last couple of issues you seem to be concentrating more and more on PC games. What has happened, where are the PlayStation reviews?

Mark

I have mentioned in the past that we have very little control over which games are released in this country, for the last few months there have just been more PC games released than PlayStation ones.
Ed

I can't remember if I sent this letter

The unmistakable voice of Cheat Codes, rivaling that of Satan himself commanding us into fulfilling it's will by preying on the weak, and those with enough money to continue spending R300 for five minutes of half hearted joy. To the vulnerable, the numbing urge to cheat "just on this one level" as "you've been on it for over five minutes" is so strong that you buy magazines just for the cheat codes included. To the weak willed the overwhelming temptation is so great you try to cheat in the opening movie. You cheat when you don't need to - you cheat when you don't want to. It becomes an obsession and before you know it you try to cheat in real life, typing "give all" and "god" on the Quake 2 console and running into a real military installation with an MS Natural Keyboard. Pressing the 9 key over and over until you realize that you must have pushed the 5 button as all you have is a machine gun, but that works just fine. The graphics are even better than a high end Pentium III with a Riva TnT, the only downside being that the "god mode" cheat doesn't work and you seem to, um, die before getting past the second Strogg, err, guard. Seriously cheat codes are damning the gaming world. Take the game Commandos: BEL for example. It took me about a week to get to the third level. I even missed VIP episodes to play it, and then the fourth level proved to be so difficult that I.... cheated. At first nothing happened, maybe cheating ain't so bad I thought. Then the poison spread and affected me to such a state that I finished that level and the next in like five minutes. I immediately lost all interest in the game and had to settle for watching the Telly Tubbies as I had nothing else to do. Cheating takes away all the enjoyment from a game leaving you feeling unfulfilled and to a great extent disillusioned. You really have to wonder why programmers include cheat codes in a game. It increases it's longevity. I think not. To make us finish a game as quickly we're left with no choice but to fork out our hard earned (you really have to wonder about the hard earned bit as I have enough time to finish games without cheats) cash for a similar game. I think so. Then there's those who justify their sins with the retort that they resort to cheat codes if they loose their saved games and have to quickly skip levels to get to the same place they were before their incompetence resulted in deleted saved games. If they're so damn stupid that they loose their saved games then I suggest that they stick to Pong. Basically there's no excuse to use a cheat code in any game. If it's too hard, shame.

Daniel Avnon
E-mail

A number of people have been commenting on the few scant remarks we made about cheating in our previous issue, saying that if cheating is so bad then why do we have cheats in our magazine and plastered all over the CD. Well I think this letter sums up the point we were so desperately trying to make. Cheating is your own business, every one cheats at some point or the other which is why the cheatless section is so popular. You have to agree though that cheating does limit how long you'll be playing a game and therefore is directly proportional to your perception of the value of a game, finishing it in less than an hour by cheating doesn't represent what the guys who made the game intended. Our mission is to perhaps make you more aware of issues that people never really think about or until they end up like Daniel here, who's fantasy of taking over a military base with a Microsoft keyboard could be considered a little "too far gone".
Ed

Spot the difference

Aren't sports simulations getting a bit over-the-top? It seems like all too many companies are just churning out updates of successful sports games. These games are dutifully heaped with praise, because they are still good, and little Jimmy games-player buys the next one. Isn't this entire cycle a bit cynical? Now, don't get me wrong, I like sport games, but what is the real difference between the one produced last year and the one that they're making this year? Better graphics, more realism, better AI and new special moves (particularly in soccer games). Sure, nothing wrong there, but still, compared to most game genres sport is just the same thing, over and over again, just a better engine each time. Let's look at first-person shooters nowadays. More and more feature revolutionary new ideas and styles of game play, as well as different, well-scripted plots. For example, the realistic action-planning game play of Rainbow Six, or the incredible engrossing quality of Half-life. Gaming genres around the world are making changes in concepts, not just game engines and AI. Obviously, it's a lot easier to change and manipulate a 3D shooter's concepts than a sports game, but still, programmers should be making some kind of effort to make each game different from it's forefathers. There's far too much sitting on the laurels in sports games. Anyone remember Speedball? That was a sports game, technologically inferior to today's sports games, but its concept is still excellent. If gaming genres around the world have managed to make quantum leaps in technology and creativity, surely makers of sports games can make some original games and concepts, rather than just reproducing FIFA 99 Gold or NBA super-turbo double-extra special. There's nothing wrong with these 'updated' spots titles of recent years, but surely we should expect more that just updated graphics, AI and a different year after the title? Perhaps gaming magazines should make some kind of comment against this relentless reproduction and put an end to these licenses-to-print-money titles that are the big sporting licenses.

Michael Dewar
Pinelands

You're are completely right in one sense but totally wrong in the other. I'm not a huge fan of sports titles but when I do sit down and install the latest cricket this or racing that, things certainly do look better since the previous outing of the line. Everything seems to have improved, the teams have been updated and just when you think they've captured every conceivable element in a game along with the very best graphics, sound and AI technology can offer, the next version beats the last one hands down. I suppose you can say it's a little like the relentless march of technology, somewhere someone wants to buy a soccer game and they'll buy the best one on the market, not being happy to settle for something five years old with old teams and now retired players. In addition competition between development companies also drives this cycle forward each year. It becomes something of an institution and no matter how many consumers complain, nothing will change. Now with regards to your second point there are more than a handful of games on the horizon that are prepared to try something different but sadly these forays into the unknown usually end badly, Savage Arena is one such title - reviewed in this issue. On the other hand Acclaim is putting the finishing touches on a game called TrickStyle, which is looking stunning (it's a futuristic urban snowboarding game, another example is Links Extreme, a golf game with a difference. Interestingly enough Speedball 2000 for the PlayStation is currently under development and if the Bitmap Brothers can pull off that special magic again it'll win original sports title of the year hands down (when it comes out). When reminiscing about the first Speedball game, the name Brutal Deluxe (a tough computer team in this old game) still strikes fear in my veins!
Ed

BACKCHAT

Big fans

My friend and I recently installed the Half-Life Uplink demo, and found that it was truly amazing, it's our favourite game, and the best game ever [fact]. Whilst reading your magazine, we always seem to find that you have a screenshot or two of Half-Life posted in the letters section, and we actually find this quite entertaining. So, in accordance with the prophecy, we decided to mould and sculpt our very own NAG Half-Life screenshots from the raw code that separates the good and evil forces of this ethereal world. Included here are the images that my friend and I created from bare nothingness. I bestow upon you, the rights and permission to publicise our marvellous creations in your sacred magazine. You know... the one with the bound cover, spine and the silvery shining pages.

Lawrence Cawood and Richard Truon
Durban

The Half-Life legacy continues.
Ed

The clipping test dummy

I'm sure you've heard it all a million times, but it really is great having such a good local publication. [*You know what, it's great to bring it to you! Ed*]. I've been gaming since the days of Atari and legends like Space Invaders and Moon Patrol and feel very privileged to have been able to grow up with the changes and innovations that have built our great industry. Honestly, I don't know what those poor people that don't game do with their lives. Where is it all going to end? Will it ever reach a peak? I think not and can only dread at the prospect of what will be thrown at us in the future. Total integration of body and mind into the game? A game where your nervous and endocrine systems are at the mercy of the developer? It makes the idea of playing Quake X a whole new ball game. They had better sort out the bugs beforehand though! You've got to feel sorry for the poor sods that test the alpha versions. Oops, better sort out that clipping problem - and a new test dummy, I mean gamer, nice gore though! All in all, we as gamers can be sure that the best is yet to come. I hope to be gaming with the latest and greatest until I'm too old to control my bodily functions when an alien drops out of it's hiding place in the semi-organic holographic ceiling. Hope they have the endocrine system working properly!

Dave
E-mail

It's great to have a true enthusiast reading our magazine. We all come from the same place you do, that distant past where we used to pump millions of tarentus into an arcade machine down at the local café and then rush back home to the trusty Commodore 64 and load up Uridium. The evolution gaming has undergone in this short time is quite remarkable if you think about it, remember how impressed we used to be with a home computer if it could display a whole 8 colours, and with some clever programming put 64 sprites on screen at the same time. The future you dream of in your letter isn't too far away though, and you can bet that one way or the other we'll be there, heavily testing that new cerebral infusion modulator, and loving every minute of it!
Ed

You decide

Who decides what games we get in South Africa? I refer to you a case in point: Heroes of Might and Magic III. This game is number 2 or 3 on the top 100 and was released in January this year overseas. Where is it? I have now given up on the South African suppliers and am sourcing it through an overseas friend. Magic and Mayhem: Where is it? Rollercoaster Tycoon: Where is it? Seems like all we get is Cricket this and Cricket that. So much for developing our strategic mind power. Next gripe. Who decides what demos you put on your CDs?

Banana boys Lawrence Cawood and Richard Truon are to blame for this!

Did I miss out on the 97MB HOMM III demo or 67MB Jagged Alliance 2 demo? Could you please try and squeeze on some decent strategy game demos?

Pete Ramsden
E-mail

I'm glad you asked... the gaming public actually decide what games we get in this country. Pregnant pause... yes, you really do, or to be more specific you decide on what we don't get. Largely due to piracy we unfortunately will never see many of the titles released overseas because it doesn't pay the South African distributors to bring in every single game out there. If more people in the country actually spent money buying games from legitimate vendors then we'd see more titles entering the country at cheaper prices. Electronic Arts has taken the first brave step everyone's been asking for by bringing prices down for their entire range of products and this will include monster games like Dungeon Keeper II, so support them and show them they aren't wasting their time. And for anyone out there who's recently bought a pirate copy of a game, thanks a million, mate. We brought Rollercoaster Tycoon in from overseas for review. Oh, and we decide what goes on the CD which is usually all the latest demos from around the world, we don't have any preference and if it's new it goes on, but we only have so much space.
Ed

Good, bad and ugly

Why do you review a game like South Park when you give it bad ratings?

Rogan
Durban

Um, so you don't waste your money on it.
Ed

Hopeful

My brother and I'd like to congratulate you on one of the best magazines of all time. We really enjoy your 'reviews under fire' and 'archives' sections and your rating system rules. It's easy to grasp but still covers a wide enough spectrum to be fair. I'm leaving school shortly, which means that I have to start thinking about what I want to do with the rest of my life. I'm seriously considering a career as an editor of an electronic entertainment magazine, as it combines the three things I love most in life: Games, Writing and Technology. Now here's what I want to know. Is there a demand for people in this line of work, what qualifications will I need and the million dollar question, how much money can I expect to earn? One last thing, here's a 'poetic masterpiece' my brother wrote in your honour: [*Tell your 'brother', thanks, but our readers aren't ready, maybe next year. Ed*]

Steve and Wil van der Walt
Centurion

So, you want to be an editor do you? Well I'm quite surprised anyone would actually want to do this for a living but if you really must know. Some things you'll have to know before embarking on this journey.... here is a day in the life of a magazine editor. If you wake up before noon it's expected that you come into work where you'll usually find a new game or two waiting on your desk. If the game sucks, you form it out to one of your reviewers and if it's good you take it for yourself. Now you must check your diary for free lunches, if you're paying then cancel the appointment - if not make sure you're on time. This pattern continues with the odd overseas trip until you collect a fat paycheque at the end of the month. The rules of life are simple, if you're good at what you do, and you love doing it then make sure you can get paid for it and you'll live long and be happy and the most important thing to remember is that money isn't everything.
Ed

Bigger better more!

Excellent magazine. I read somewhere that DVD games are going to be the order of the day. Imagine what the quality of the games would look like with theatre quality picture and sound. I have a gripe, why do developers always develop good games for players with 3D cards? I am a poor I.T. student who finds the price of 3D cards a little bit exorbitant. It's also no use to go cheap and get absolute rubbish. I am an avid role-player and would appreciate it tremendously if you could publish some walkthroughs for games like this. Diablo, although dated by today's standards was absolutely excellent! Why can't more games give us this type of addictive game play instead of graphics that require those expensive 3D cards, delivering painful game play?

Ryan Benting
Cape Town

The DVD revolution is as inevitable as the tide, there are a few games that have already been released on DVD but the gains they offer don't really justify the medium they're on at this point in time. Many of you might remember the first few CD-ROM titles that appeared on the scene, they were nasty full motion video affairs with limited game play. Developers might have learnt their lesson by now so we'll all be watching the first few titles that arrive and give you a full report. Also remember that DVD games don't necessarily equal better graphics and sound.
Ed

Please send all question and opinion related questions to **Backchat**
Please send all your technical and troubleshooting questions to **Backchat Technical**

Thanks for all the letters!

KONAMI - HISTORY IN THE MAKING

AtariBaby kidnapped all the directors of Konami and then forced them to talk, and this is what they said... *(Part 2 of 3)*

Last month we started an interesting journey back in time, looking at the historical development behind one of the worlds most underrated video game companies, Konami. For those who missed last months issue here is a small recap to bring you up to speed. - AtariBaby

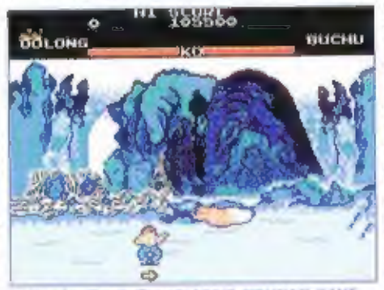
Up to 1984 Konami was probably best known for games like Time Pilot and the all time classic Hyper Olympics, with their biggest single success being Frogger. Although originally designed by Konami, Frogger ended up being distributed by SEGA in countries like the USA and Europe. The result was that the game became better known as a SEGA title with very little credit going to Konami. So Konami was left scraping the egg off their face. But not willing to be left out in the cold as far as the console market goes, they decided to sell the 3rd party development rights to their biggest titles.

Coleco opted to port a pseudo 3-D Japanese arcade title by Konami, called Antarctic Adventure, to ColecoVision. This was the first game to feature the character Pentaron the Penguin, later to appear in Konami's smash arcade hit Pengo. Parker Brothers successfully released Konami's Gyruss for both the Atari 2600 and the ColecoVision, but after the collapse of the home game industry in 1984, they scuttled big plans for another Konami-related release, Frogger 2. Three deep, which credited Parker Brothers as developer and was released in small quantities. (Frogger 2 became one of the most prominent rare 2600 games in the wake of the crash and is worth a cool $ 200 in the Atari collectors circles). As Konami's stake in the home game market had been limited to a handful of 2600 cartridges and a large variety of games that other companies had licensed from them and manufactured on their own budgets, it mostly reaped benefits from the licensing fees sold to 3rd party developers.

With the big crash of 1984 bringing the home industry to its knees, the big arcade game companies like Namco and Konami had to shelf all the development ideas for the meantime. But the crash clearly didn't affect the arcade market, as 1985 proved to be the biggest year as far as new title releases went for both Namco and Konami.

Konami's biggest smash for 1985 had to be Yie Ar Kung Fu as it left a huge mark on game designers and fighting games that, even today, cannot be matched. Six months earlier, Data East had released Karate Champ, a game often cited as the earliest inspiration for Capcom's Street Fighter and the scores of clones that followed its sequel into arcades. If Karate Champ was the first inspiration, Yie Ar Kung Fu was the best. Karate Champ used two joysticks and no buttons for a single player to control, while Yie Ar used a joystick and two buttons (punch and kick). Karate Champ's 'fighters' consisted of you (a guy in a white karate outfit), your opponent (a guy in a red karate outfit), and a charging bull you would stop for a bonus. Yie Ar Kung Fu's fighters were entirely different people, 11 in all and each armed with a different martial art or weapon. Karate Champ had 24 moves in total for its two characters, Yie Ar had 16 for its main character and many additional attacks for each of its bosses. It was also the first game to feature life bars as we would know them twelve years later.

A Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle under attack



Yie Ar Kung Fu - classic fighting game

By 1987 Nintendo emerged as the first company to tread the ice waters of the home console industry with NES. It was also in 1987 that Konami really started to back the NES in a big way, beginning a pattern of support that would establish the company as Nintendo's top third-party developer. 1987 saw the home NES release of Hyper Olympics, The Goonies, and the company's first major movie-licensed property, Top Gun. Konami also offered American gamers a cartridge conversion of a little action title - the company's first Famicom Disk System release in Japan (a game with close relations to another Konami title released earlier in the year for the MSX2 Computer System, Vampire Killer). This Famicom title, Dracula, or Akumajo Dracula, was renamed Castlevania, beginning a legacy that has endured to this day.

The joystick eater - Hyper Olympics

Konami reached the pinnacle of its arcade success in 1989 with a single title that would burn brightly and bring the company untold riches for a couple of years. A little-known independent black-and-white teenage comic book named Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles had spawned a dreamlike scenario for its creators, with cartoons, full-colour kids comics, action figures, movie deals, and clothing lines. Konami took on Namco in a bidding race and won the rights to produce TMNT video games, and produce them they did. The first dedicated TMNT arcade game was a four-player simultaneous machine with a large monitor and loud stereo speakers. It attracted young players like ants to a picnic. Konami wisely chose a simple side-scrolling walk-and-punch format, filling the screen and speakers with backgrounds, enemies, voices, and music right out of the cartoons buttons (and filling the machines with money).

At its release TMNT was the best and most appropriate licensed property developed in the gaming industry, flashy enough to attract teens and simple enough for younger kids to play. Arcade game owners went crazy. One machine - placed in an arcade, movie theatre, or pizza parlour - could bring in ten times its cost. Two machines could bring in even more money, and Konami released both a four-player conversion kit and a two-player 'downgrade', which let operators turn old machines into Turtles games. Operator-adjustable coin settings allowed owners to set the game up to let players play for as long as seemed appropriate to keep the game active. TMNT achieved a 98-percent distribution rate, meaning that 98 percent of places with arcade machines had the game - a figure unheard of since the days of Pong, Pac-Man, and Donkey Kong many years earlier. Kids now wanted to come to arcades to play a Turtles game, and of course, they wanted Turtles games for their Nintendo systems as well, hence the NES saw its single biggest seller since Mario Bros.

Next month I'll conclude my look at this diverse company and let you in on my next project. I've already started collecting data on a game that everyone should remeber, your clue is... X marks the spot. If you have any questions or comments then mail me at will@radioalgoa.com

AtariBaby

The Demo Scene

OPTIMISATION 101

WHEN FAST ISN'T FAST ENOUGH

BY PAUL FURBER

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E-MAIL: MAVERICK@IS.CO.ZA

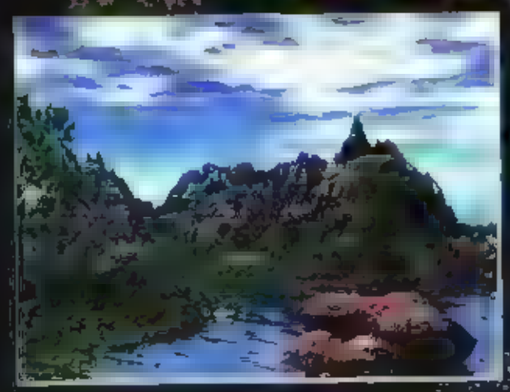
The new edition of the Concise Oxford Dictionary points out that both optimist and optimise come from the same Latin root word meaning best. This is appropriate - demo coders are by and large [illegible] company of one or more of them, they may mutter incantations like "If I do this, then this code will run [illegible]" [illegible] may devote themselves to long and complicated technical manuals that [illegible]

The reason is simple: faster is the name of the game in demo programming. This principle has been forgotten over the last couple of years thanks mainly to two things: 1) games have caught up with demos in what they can achieve and 2) graphics accelerator hardware has progressed beyond all recognition. The two are related - most modern games support graphics acceleration in some form and games coders have had a steady supply of ex-demo programmers joining their ranks in recent years. Most of the demo tricks to do with old graphics hardware have also become rapidly obsolete, given that the long-standard VGA card can now update the screen at quite a zippy rate.


VAPRO

But pure software graphics engines cannot approach anything like the quality or speed of dedicated silicon graphics. For an easy example compare software-only Quake (I or II) (II is accelerated only) to its OpenGL equivalent running on the same CPU but with the addition of an accelerator card such as a RivaTNT.

So why bother to optimise? The reason is fairly simple - most demo competitions forbid the use of accelerated hardware only options. It's fine to support the hardware as an option, but a demo that requires a hardware accelerator to run won't get you past the qualifying round. Some feel that the demo scene should have moved with the times and kept up with trends but there are two good [illegible] has them and a wide audience is an advantage. Secondly an accelerator is normally accessed through an API - such as OpenGL or Direct3D.



[illegible] purely far an accelerator may look impressive, but it tells the viewer very little about the capabilities of the programmer (except that they know an API or two) and everything about the capabilities of the graphics card. But the best reason of all to optimise is because a hardware accelerator won't do everything for you - it won't calculate any mathematical stuff or mix your soundtrack or calculate any time functions or help you be creative.

Making it faster if you've not going to throw hardware at it is a problem, the only way to make your program go faster is to, well, make it go faster. There are a number of ways to do this but before you jump in and start eliminating redundant code and looking for better ways to do things, remember the First Law: premature optimisation is the root of all programming evil. It is a waste of time to spend the first three weeks of a four week project tuning a routine which will only be run once at the beginning of the program - or worse, get thrown away after you've decided there is a better way.

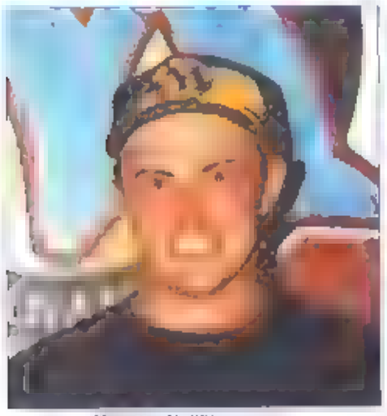
So how do you find out which part of your code is running the slowest? Refer to the Second Law which states: use a profiling tool. Profilers examine running programs and will print statistical information about their components and how long they take to execute. Take note of the results. Once you've examined the profiler's output, you may decide to rewrite certain portions of the code to make them faster.

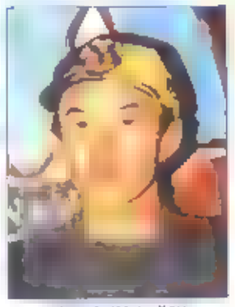
Which is the fastest implementation of all? To the back of the class everyone who put their hands up and said assembler. Wrong - the fastest routine in the world is not written in C or assembler or even silicon-based microcode. It's actually the one you don't have to write at all - because you found a better method. This brings us to Law 3: there is always a better way. Are you using the fastest search algorithm?

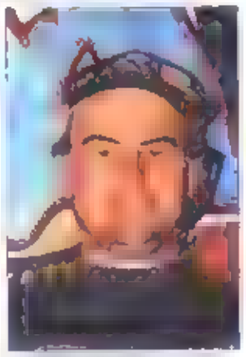
Can you precalculate certain values ahead of time? Can you eliminate any code altogether? Stay tuned for next month's column when I take a look at optimisation methods in some detail.

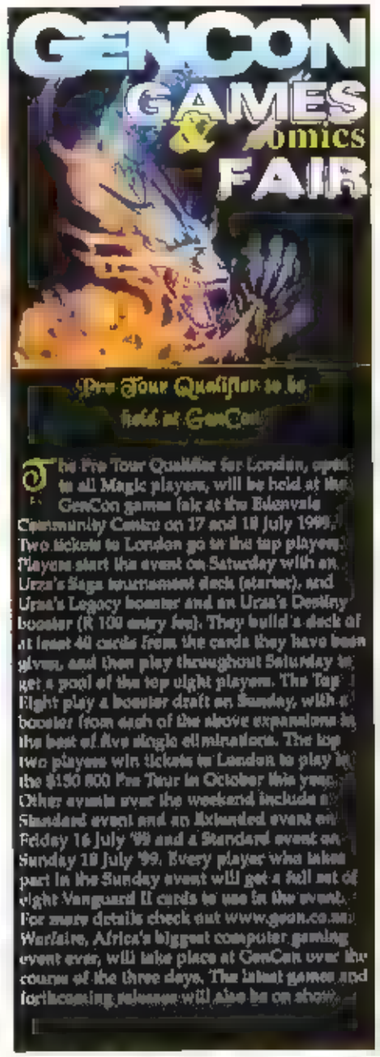

Paul Furber - Maverick

South Africa's New Magic Champ!









Pro Tour Qualifier to be held at GenCon

The Pro Tour Qualifier for London, open to all Magic players, will be held at the GenCon games fair at the Eskenvale Community Centre on 17 and 18 July 1999. Two tickets to London go to the top players. Players start the event on Saturday with an Urza's Saga tournament deck (starter), and Urza's Legacy booster and an Urza's Destiny booster (R 100 entry fee). They build a deck of at least 40 cards from the cards they have been given, and then play throughout Saturday to get a goal of the top eight players. The Top Eight play a booster draft on Sunday, with a booster from each of the above expansions in the best of five single eliminations. The top two players win tickets to London to play in the $150 000 Pro Tour in October this year. Other events over the weekend include a Standard event and an Extended event on Friday 16 July '99 and a Standard event on Sunday 18 July '99. Every player who takes part in the Sunday event will get a full set of eight Vanguard II cards to use in the event. For more details check out www.gcon.co.za. Warfaire, Africa's biggest computer gaming event ever, will take place at GenCon over the course of the three days. The latest games and forthcoming releases will also be on show.

UPGRADING FOR NOOBS

HELP

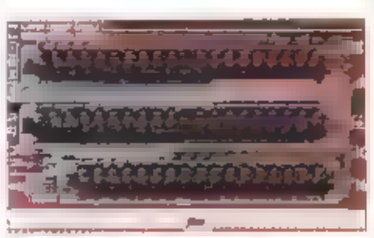
PART 3 - STORAGE DEVICES

This month we will be looking at storage components ie. Hard drives, CD-ROM drives and DVD drives. I did say we would have a look at graphics cards but I think the graphics card article in Hardware Hype should answer most of your questions.

Storage devices come in all makes and forms and the important thing is that you know just how much you are willing to spend on storage devices. They can potentially be the most expensive components in a PC. You also need to know what interface you will be using to connect the storage peripherals to your motherboard.

IDE vs SCSI

The two standards currently in existence are IDE and SCSI (Small Computer System Interface). IDE is the most widely used since most motherboards that ship have this controller built in. [illegible] these days. IDE is also the less [illegible] and less confusing [illegible] SCSI and the devices that connect to IDE are also less expensive than SCSI devices. You can identify the IDE controller on your motherboard by two black slots with two rows of pin-sized holes. You also get the ribbon cables, which are used to connect devices to the controller on your motherboard.



The reason the IDE is less expensive is that it is limited to four devices, two per channel, which can be connected to your PC. IDE is also limited to one instruction that can be executed on a channel at any given time. This is the reason people usually put their hard drives on one channel and their CD-ROM and DVD drives on the other. This way you can access your hard drive and CD-ROM at full speed, otherwise if you have both on one channel you can either read and write to your hard drive or read from the CD-ROM at any given time (not good).

IDE is also limited in transfer rate. Maximum transfer speed on IDE is 33MB/s and most of the time it doesn't even reach this speed. The speed is fine for most applications and games don't have a problem with it. Applications that can use more bandwidth are typically graphics and video applications, which need to access the drives at higher speeds.

An IDE controller doesn't have a dedicated processor to handle all the data transfers and uses your system's CPU to do this task, which means that it costs you processing time.

This is where SCSI steps in and it's the [illegible]. Firstly you are not limited to 4 devices and most SCSI cards typically support up to 15 devices per channel and it can execute multiple commands at the same time [illegible] devices. SCSI transfer speeds range from 5MB/s for the old SCSI controllers [illegible] up to 80MB/s for the new SCSI 3 controllers. SCSI controllers, at least the decent ones, have their own processor to handle transfers lessening the strain on your system's CPU. The only drawbacks are that SCSI requires some technical knowledge to set up and costs a fortune when compared to IDE. The controllers ship with their own BIOS and incorrect settings can seriously damage your storage devices.

SCSI controllers come in a variety of [illegible] versions and this makes choosing the correct controller a tricky business as well.

SCSI is also not available on most motherboards and requires that you purchase a SCSI controller which will set you back a minimum of R1 000.00 for a fairly decent one. The drives are also more expensive costing four times or more the price of a comparable IDE drive. Expensive to say the least, but you get what you pay for and it rest assured that SCSI 3 controllers are the fastest currently in production for PCs.

Another advantage of SCSI is that you can connect external peripherals to your controller such as scanners, tape drives, external CD-ROMs, cameras etc. As you can see SCSI is quite a versatile connector and has proved is that IDE doesn't offer.

Generally I would recommend SCSI to people just starting out on computers due to a [illegible] mistakes that can be made [illegible] to inform you that [illegible] does exist and there is something faster than IDE. Explaining the intricacies of SCSI is beyond the scope of this article and I would suggest that if you were interested in SCSI that you do some research on the internet before committing yourself. Of course you also get RAID controllers but they are VERY expensive and generally only for use in high-end servers.

Storage Device Bottlenecks

Even with SCSI in a machine with the fastest hard drives, storage devices are still the biggest speed bottleneck in a system. Memory, the CPU and other peripherals operate on a nanosecond respond basis while drives respond in milliseconds making it [illegible] times slower than the rest of your machine. This is why choosing the correct hard drives and other storage mediums can significantly improve your machines speed.

Hard Drives

Probably the most important storage component of any PC since this is what your operating system runs off of. It is also important to remember that hard drives are one of the few components that you can move to a new machine when you upgrade again, so you want a decent size and speed hard drive.

The important aspects to look for when choosing a hard drive is size, access time, transfer rate, warranty, manufacturer and of course price. Nowadays you can get a 5GB IDE hard drive for under R1 000.00 and every extra GB costs about R100.00 extra on average. For today's games and applications you shouldn't even consider anything under 5GB. Take Soldier's Creed for instance. It can do [illegible] installation of 2.5GB's half of the drive and the games [illegible] get bigger and bigger.

The most important aspects to look for are the access time and transfer rate. The lower your access speed the less you have to wait for your computer to access data. [illegible] most hard drives support an access time of [illegible] seconds or less. The transfer rate refers to the amount of data in MBs your [illegible] can read and [illegible] second. The higher the transfer the faster your applications and games load.

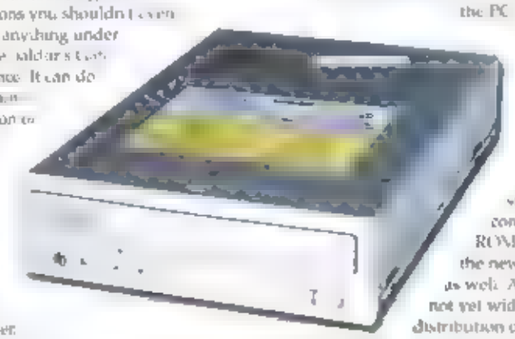
There are many hard drive manufacturers on the market ranging from the well-known Seagate to the lesser-known Fujitsu. I suggest that you buy a drive from a well-known manufacturer, or as I would say the [illegible] companies since they have been developing drives for a very long time. We prefer Seagate since most of us here at NAG have used their drives since we started using computers, but Maxtor, IBM, Western Digital and Quantum also make dependable hard drives that give the least amount of trouble. Most people stick to a manufacturer once they have bought a drive from them. The only drive that we have had problems with thus far is Fujitsu, although it was just a defective drive which the supplier was willing to swap out for a new one.

You will find that if a drive were giving problems right after you bought it that most suppliers would be willing to swap it out for a new one. This brings us to warranty periods, which can be very important, since you want to keep your hard drive for as long as possible. Look for a hard drive that has a warranty period of 3 years or longer. They are available and never even consider ones that come with a [illegible]-month warranty. It's always better to be safe than sorry.

One thing to remember when you buy a hard drive is to ask the retailer or supplier that sells it to you to supply the installation leaflet that usually accompanies it. They seem to forget that you need this information for the dip switches on the drive and to configure it correctly in your BIOS. Most of the drives should auto-select on installation although there are those that require manual settings.

CD ROMS & DVD Drives

The new portable storage mediums I can't remember when floppy disks where used and installing a program took the manual insertion of 20 or more floppies. Luckily CD-ROMs came about to alleviate the disk changing and we are now again entering a stage where programs are starting to ship on more than one CD-ROM disc. In the last two years we have seen yet another drive emerge the PC DVD drive which ultimately will replace the CD-ROM.



THE TRUSTY CD ROM, AN EARLIER MORNING OF A SHEEPOVERTAKE DATE

This makes the PC DVD drives currently an excellent option for upgrading since it is backward compatible with CD-ROM discs and can read the newer PC DVD discs as well. Although DVD is not yet widely used for distribution of applications and games, the time is coming when it will replace CD-ROM drives. For now you can use it to watch DVD movies on your computer while we wait for it to become the de facto standard for distributing programs.

I would suggest when deciding on a CD-ROM or PC DVD drive that you seriously consider buying a PC DVD drive. It costs more but will require less of an upgrade when you need to upgrade again, just simply transfer the drive into your new machine.

There was a problem with the first generation PC DVD drives. They had problems reading CD-R discs but that was sorted out with the second generation. For this reason make sure you buy a second generation or later PC DVD drive.

When deciding on a CD-ROM or DVD look out for the following: Make, access time, speed and manufacturer. Make is important and try to buy a drive that is branded. There are too many "Made in Taiwan" models, or as they are better known - no-name brand drives. Stick to your major manufacturers for DVD or CD-ROM drives. Them being Creative, Plextor, Diamond Multimedia, Sony, Samsung, Acer etc. You pay more but you get better quality equipment that will last longer and give fewer problems.

Once again access time and transfer speed has to be taken into consideration. CD-ROM drives typically have an access time of 180 milliseconds and the lower this number the faster you can access your data. Transfer speed is very easy to figure out with CD-ROM and DVD drives. The speed is designated by an 'X' symbol with a number in front of it. 40X would mean this is a 40 speed drive. For CD-ROM drives you multiply this with 150 and you get the amount of KBs per second the drive can transfer in other words a 40 speed can transfer 6000 KB per second or 6 MB per second. You can do the same with DVD just multiply by 1500 and you get the KB/s the drive can transfer.

Warranty is important but less so with CD-ROM and PC DVD drives since they generally ship with a 12 month warranty due the mechanical nature of the parts and that the drive collects dust when it is opened and closed.

Stiffy Drives

I know you are asking why stiffy drives? The reason is because, most machines still have them and from time to time you need to access the odd stiffy. It doesn't matter too much who makes, for access speed or transfer rate since most of them are the same. It is just important that you need one. There are the newer 2MB stiffies and even a 120MB one but they are rarely used and you don't need those unless you are required to access those types of disks.

Other Drives..

There are other drives as well such as tape drives, CD-ROM writers, Zip, Jaz etc but covering all these are beyond the scope of this article. I only covered what you need to know about the drives that you will find in a PC machines. These other drives are usually used for specific purposes and the home users will rarely have to buy one of these.

I hope that my small synopsis on the storage devices such as hard drives and CD-ROM drives has helped you understand what to look for when making a purchasing decision.

Next month I will cover monitors, till then..

PLANESCAPE TORMENT

Coming from Black Isle Studios, who have produced many games for Interplay, a new stunning RPG game. Torment is a violent, isometric, scrolling top-down view with dynamic real-time lighting and weather effects, 3D height maps allowing for realistic topography in the terrain. This irreverent and breathtakingly beautiful RPG is set at the crossroads of the multiverse. Black Isle intends to create an amusingly eccentric, mind-spinning, cliché-breaking power fantasy splashed with visceral moments of breathtaking violence.

Derek dela Fuente

Game Setting

Set in the TSR world of Planescape, Torment will be using the BioWare Forgotten Realms CRPG engine as a base for the game, and Interplay artists and designers will supply the Planescape ambience. The basic goal of the game is to solve puzzles, find keys and interact. You wake up from the dead with amnesia. The point of the game is to find out where you are, who you are, how you died, and what the future has in store for you. If it means killing then so be it. At its core, Torment is a mystery, with the character as the enigma. Throughout the game, curiosity, greed, fear, a need to escape, survival, self-defence and revenge will all take turns driving the character toward the grand finale, but ultimately all of these motivations revolve around finding the answers to the following questions: Who am I? Who keeps trying to kill me? Why am I immortal? Learning the answers to these questions can give the player character tremendous power over his destiny. It may also mean dying a lot. But fate is a fickle mistress. Torment is an epic story of an immortal character that suffers from amnesia and must search for his own past, identity and destiny. At its core, Torment is a mystery with the player's character as the central enigma. Someone or something is stalking the player's character and the main plot element is to figure out who, and more importantly what, keeps killing him.

EVIL MINIONS WITH TOO MUCH TIME ON THEIR HANDS

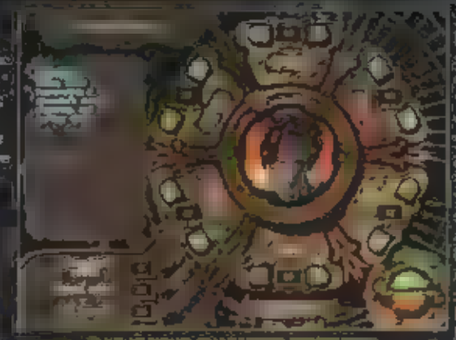
THEY HAVE SOME ANY MATTER THAN THIS!

A RARE SIGHT OF SUN HERE HERE ON ICE

STUNNING GRAPHICS AROUND EVERY SPEEDY CORNER

The Player

The player quickly discovers it is almost impossible for him to die. He regenerates from traumatic damage, shrugs off stab wounds, and becomes a close friend of fast-developing scabs and blisters that harden and fall off within minutes. The problem is that every time the player dies, he 'forgets' everything his previous incarnation knew. Or thought it knew. This is extremely frustrating. Combining the character's amnesia with his ability to rise from the dead, a whole bunch of questions come to mind. What has he done in previous incarnations that affect the present? What pleasant or unpleasant events have occurred in Sigil and the outer planes that he is responsible for? And the most important question: What led him to this state? How did this happen? (Many other people are also interested in this question). As the player will discover, many have been touched by his actions in the past, in the present and the future. What the player has forgotten, they have not. You define yourself through your actions, now through pushing a set of numbers around on the character generation screen. Your actions in the game flesh out the character. You decide how strong you get, which career path to follow, the skills you wish to learn, what abilities you develop and what spells you wish to study. The entire game is the character generation screen.



THAT'S A PRETTY COMPLICATED MAP

Torment is an expansive and highly detailed game environment and some stunning artwork can be on hand. It will also feature huge backgrounds, interactions and even larger spell effects. Point and click. A simplified 2-click interface is on hand with your twenty quality spells and spell effects. Interactions for a party of up to five characters, the player plots and chooses and artificial intelligence scripting for NPCs, the planned to make

THOSE SPELLS ON TOP OF THE SCREEN ARE TWENTY!

incorporated the location of every secret button in every wall texture of the cube by cube dungeon. In this game, every inch of the game world will be sculpted by an artist. It's going to be unique, and it's going to turn some heads. The Planescape bestiary, Planes bestiary, Planes bestiary, characters

GENRE: ROLE PLAYING

DEVELOPER: BLACK ISLE STUDIOS

PUBLISHER: INTERPLAY

SUPPLIER: MAIL ORDER WAREHOUSE

TEL: (01) 315 000

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 99

INTERNET

WWW.INTERPLAY.COM

Skin cut, pluck out eyes and the skin textures display are remarkable realistic quality. Burn yourself and you will 'feel the skin peel!' Planescape is a more adult, hard-core fantasy setting compared to other TSR worlds. The

"WE WANT YOU TO PLAY THE GAME THAT YOU WANT TO PLAY. YOU DON'T NEED TO BE IMMORTAL. YOU DON'T NEED TO BE MAGE, CLERIC, THIEF OR YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT SOME THROUGH ANY CONVENTIONAL MEANS. THERE'S NO THOUGHT OF HAVING METERS, CHANGEABLE, MORALITY POINTS OR MORE MANAGEMENT THAT GETS IN THE WAY OF YOU BEATING AN OPPONENT TO DEATH WITH HIS OWN SWORD, ARM OR BARTER A SPELL THAT TELEPORTS AN OPPONENT'S BRAIN OUT OF HIS STOMACH."

Game allows you to build your character to suit your playing style.

Technologically Speaking

A lot of focus has been placed on the game engine, which presents the game in fine detail. Each map is 16-bit colour, pre-rendered and unique. Characters can step into pools of light and shadow and be illuminated appropriately. It has global lighting that allows the world to fluctuate from dawn to noon to dusk to night and back again. The backdrops are forever changing and this is down to the engine that can use special techniques to present the backdrops. No more repetitious dungeon tiles used to construct genetic dungeons where you're party will foam at the mouth and go berserk on the mind flayer as soon as he sees him, your onwardly thief may slip the scene as soon as first blood is drawn, the fiddle twitch in your party may wait till you are at 25% hit points and everybody else has fallen unconscious before stabbing you in the back) all help

One

weapons have

architecture, the people, the creatures...everything has an edge to it. Fear, emotions, faith and other abstracts actually

make their presence felt on reality... In Planescape, belief has the power to reshape worlds, kill and resurrect powers (gods) and change the laws of physics.

DERE DELA FUENTE

KEEPER 2

NO REST FOR THE WICKED

The first multiple-award winning 'Dungeon Keeper' released in July 1997, has now sold over 200,000 units, and was followed by an add-on level pack, 'Deeper Dungeons', at the end of last year. Now Bullfrog, the developers of the original, are putting the final touches to the sequel which is eagerly anticipated, to say the least!

—Derek dela Fuente

GAMING FEATURE

I caught up with producer Nick Goldsworthy, who had plenty to say about the game. "Looking back on Dungeon Keeper we have had lots of feedback regarding the game. It is strange the way the game was perceived. Billed as a Simulation come management game where we turn the roles around - taking the bad guys, who the player controls, and pitting them against the good guys. The actual game went down really well but a lot of users saw it as an RPG game with strategy and lots of other elements and we believe the success may have been bigger if the game genre had been clear. Dungeon Keeper II with a more up front marketing campaign will ensure that it will have broader appeal. DK2 offers more spells, more traps, more creatures - 18 more to make it around 30 - more of everything!"

Storyline

For those not familiar with the game, the background and basic story is that there are 20 gems hidden within the dungeons, each of which forms part of a special ring. (The game offers 70 levels - including 20 multiplayer, 20 campaign levels with five secret levels, 20 skirmish levels, along with 'My Pet Dungeon levels'). You, as the Dungeon Keeper, who has an alliance with the reaper, the only creature powerful enough to collect the gems, have to go through the levels of the game to collect these gems and, once they're all in place, a door will open to the outside world allowing you to escape the dungeon. As the gems are collected the reaper becomes more powerful and over time you see him getting bigger and more powerful. You have to get your imps to bring back the gems to the central dungeon 'heart' before moving on to the next level. A whole new story has been created by Bullfrog. This may sound easy but it isn't a simple case of running around and picking them up. Nick explained that they have tried to open up the game and make it more interesting. "Purely on a story level we have brought in a scriptwriter to ensure the game flows nicely and has a strong pull on the player for this was one area that was lacking in the original game. We do not go too deep but we have to ensure the player understands the many plots, like the fact you have an enemy rival keeper who is on the quest for the gems as well."

THE WATER PIT

At the start of each of the missions we will display a 3D map where you will see a battle in the distance - other heroes and keepers fighting amongst themselves and this 3D is pictorial - so the plot of the game is presented in graphical form as well as text and FMV, all of which have been created by the professional script writer." DK2 offers a lot of the original ideas but we have built and improved on every area and added lots more to the game. There are stealth missions where you have to hide, creatures in the shadows and get them to steal things, or others that will see you intercepting a convoy and getting the jewel. We've concentrated a lot more on the actual creatures this time around: their abilities, their resistance to other effects and so on. It has become the standard phrase to use when writing a sequel to say it is bigger and better but we are talking about over 50 people involved in this project which is the largest team assembled at Bullfrog. It is the emotions of creatures that have been really focused on and this has been done via the Artificial Intelligence. We have written a new 3D engine and none of the original code has been used. We have 'really' started from scratch on this."

With many game sequels, some of the original team aren't usually involved in them, as they're no longer around, so was this the case with DK II? "It isn't the same team. One of the lead programmers is still there, as are a couple of others, but we looked at the product and decided that we could make a better game if we started afresh. We started this in September last year and, the size of the team, together with obvious advances in technology, have allowed us to have a turnaround of about 14 months. It's far more structured now."

Improved Interface

One fundamental change from 'Dungeon Keeper' is in the combat position of creatures. In the first game the strategy element was fairly basic; you could pick up lots of creatures, put them on a square and they would fight. "Dungeon Keeper II' is going for a more strategic feel to it - put the creatures down and they'll move to an adjacent square. You can't place a creature on top of another, which leads to a game with more involvement in strategy. Another much needed improvement is that it will be far easier to dig out rooms: you can drag and select this time instead of the laborious method of single square selection.

As a part of the ever-evolving process the interface has also been a central feature that has really been improved on. Apart from being able to drag they have ensured the player fully understands not only how to use the interface, which is more intuitive, but also present it in a differing way. On the early levels the required icons grow and shrink so for the first level where there are only three icons they have been sized up. All are now divided into four tabs - creatures, rooms, spells and items that are constructed in your workshop. Icons are introduced as you progress through the game so at the end of each level where you have collected a gem the new icons for the next level spin out and land on your interface so you know what items you are going to get for the next stage. Nick was animated in conveying the interface and elaborated this point. Many man-hours have been spent on the interface, and to this end the first three levels are mainly tutorials where this interface is introduced to the player. "We didn't want the player to be confronted with 20 icons as soon as they start the game", explains Nick. "We're going to shrink and grade each icon depending on its ability. On the first level you only have to dig, create a treasury and a couple of creatures so those icons will be large. We're also planning to have a favourites bar, so the icons you use the most can be placed there for easy access." Extra narrative has been added as feedback from the consumers showed they wanted to know why certain characters were getting angry. Now a dark and sinister voice will explain in detail some of the background events so the player will know exactly what is going on and can gauge the moods of the differing creatures. Above the head of the creatures are also indicators, which inform the player of their mood and what their job is. If you slap one of the characters for instance you will see the red circle around the indicator drop.

Training

"In the last game, players found that they could keep training their creatures to make them powerful. Now, although that will still happen to a certain degree, they'll find that they also need combat experience. This is gained by throwing creatures into a combat pit to fight each other. (Depending on the creature's mana, you'll find that they are stunned for a period and this gives more variety over what happened in the first game). Everyone else gathers round to watch this spectacle, and the last one standing gains valuable combat experience. In the early stages of training this is done in the training area, but more on this in the combat pit and the creatures are trained at a higher level. The new combat pit is more like an advanced training arena." I asked Nick if there are any new characters in the game. "Yes, there's a Dark Knight, who has red eyes and anti-Paladin armour; a Thief, who acts like a stealth commando, and is useful in multiplayer; and a Dark Angel, who can turn corpses into fighting skeletons. There's a lot more too." A really nice touch implemented is that if you move into one of the characters like the vampire a special filter will give a differing look and for the vampire a misty red tinge will appear on the screen. For the knight you will see a view through his helmet; for the firefly you will see hexagons. "There are so many new characters, spells and rooms that I want people to be surprised by some of the them. I love it when you can summon skeletons out of the ground. Each creature has their own attack move and each have around 30 statistics but this is not an RPG game so it does not go into depth! DK2 is all about battling - a crosshair will be added onscreen when you are in sniper mode. Another aspect not to be overlooked is that in first person mode you can get other creatures to follow you, you have a strong ability in attack and a lot of the creatures have special skills in this mode which you don't have in third person!"

© ORIGINAL DUNGEON KEEPER, EVIL GENIUS

Rooms

Not only are there more characters and creatures, but the traps have been expanded and improved significantly. There's a smart sentry trap, similar to a gun turret, that can track creatures within a certain range; a new fear trap that looks like a gargoyle (all creatures have a fear of threat system) which makes creatures run off into other traps; a boulder trap that works in a way similar to that in the first Indiana Jones film; hidden spike traps that flip over if anything comes into contact with them. There's also a trigger trap, which allows you to link traps to be triggered together if something touches the main trigger trap. Plenty of wacky combinations there then! The number of available traps comes down to how much resource you put into your workshops. In the past this would have cost you gold, but Bullfrog has implemented a new mana system that is used for the majority of spells and traps. The size of your rooms and the number of creatures in them, along with their total experience, generate this mana.

THE HORNY REAPER, A TERRIFYING SIGHT... ANYWAY...

Casino

Both gold and manna are used within the game. The more land you own the more manna you have to replenish your traps. Gold is used to build up rooms, to training creatures. It is the rooms that are really the most interesting features on the game and DK2 offers so much. For instance, the Casino room, not disco as some people

MAR Dairy

GENRE: DUNGEON MANAGEMEN

DEVELOPER: B.H. FROG

PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS

SUPPLIER: EA AFRICA
TEL: 0 1 803 2 2

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE: JULY 99

WEBSITE:
WWW.BULLFROG.CO.UK

would assume, enter and music will play and some real disco tracks will be added and seeing the [illegible] dancing is really humorous. The serious side is that each creature has their own amount of money and they can spend it on the roulette table or drink. Drink too much and creatures become drunk, reducing their fighting ability. A good play if you see a creature walking off with some big winnings is if you slap it you can actually get the gold for yourself but you must ensure the others do not see you otherwise they will become angry and annoyed with you!

Training

If you like your games spicy then Nick explained that you can now play the hero as well as the bad guy. "Grab one of the heroes, take them to the torture room and there are many techniques you can employ there. They will eventually reach a point after some interrogating where they will convert to your side and then you can play as that hero. Find the mistress and she actually enjoys being tortured. Merely slapping creatures if they are being mischievous is a good thing to do occasionally."

Creature Combat

Nick Goldsworthy continues, "We will also have new creature spells and new doors in addition to the new traps, along with a few new rooms, such as the Casino and the Pit. The use of the creature spells depends on what level that creature is at; the vampire can create five skeletons at his highest level. Most of the rooms from Dungeon Keeper have been kept in simply because they worked well, but they do look different this time around. We're playing about with some more for possible inclusion, but we thought the best thing to do was introduce more creatures and characters. We've spent more time and effort on creature traits, so if they're feeling a bit miserable you can cheer them up with a visit to the Casino. You might lose some gold, but you'll certainly boost their morale."

Gaming Engine

As for game features, Bullfrog seem rather pleased with the graphical effects and one in particular. It is when Creatures enter a dungeon through a portal that uses a ripple effect, similar to that in the film Stargate, whilst this same effect is a product of running through water. Torches on walls create multiple shadows (like football floodlight systems) that will be cast over other creatures. "That's the first time we've done anything like that", said Goldsworthy. "If you pass a torch, your draught will cause it to flicker and follow you."

Improvement

"Another feature we are using is direct play for Internet use. There's TCP/IP, IPX, Modem, Serial and also a dedicated Bullfrog server. 'DK II' will have special multiplayer maps, a skirmish option and about 50 changeable options. We're looking at a maximum of 16 players at the moment".

"We've also developed our game editor, but we haven't decided what to do with it yet. We want to do some things with data discs later on, but we may decide to release the editor on later versions of the game. What we will probably do is release downloads from the web site every few weeks, a new creature, a new trap, a new level, etc., to keep the momentum going for a few months after the game ships."

Keep Your Chickens

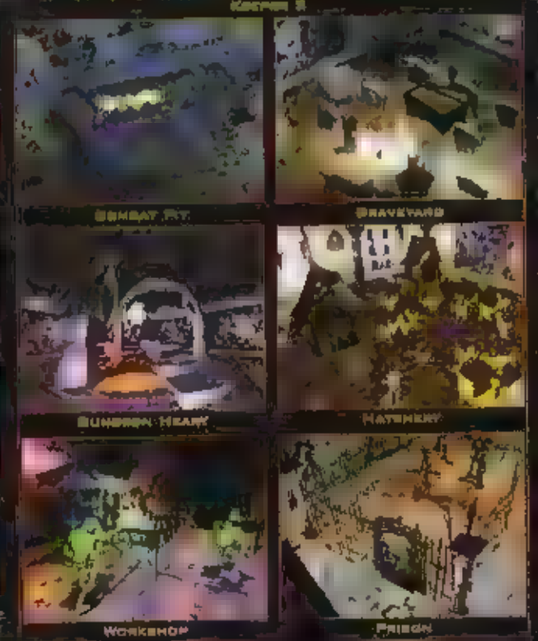
A friend of mine was eager to know whether it would still be possible to slap the chickens in 'DK II' - and he'll be pleased to hear that it is! "The chickens are no longer limited in numbers, so if you build a hatchery that's too small, they'll start to wander off and get picked up by other [illegible]."

Combat

The Horned Reaper will simply stamp on [illegible] though. This results in a rather nice line in floating feathers. Letters from [illegible]

Welfare

Welfare groups are probably already in the post. Asked about the technology [illegible] explained, "There are some projects we're doing that are technology led, but we have released games where the playability has suffered because of too much technology. Our stance is that gameplay comes first, but we are advised by our R&D department that new graphic cards, etc., are being released and we do look at them, but it really is all about gameplay. That said, we believe that the look of DK2 is a cut above any other game you will see. We now see the technology side as the standard feature. Bullfrog lead the field because it is standard practice for all the team to ensure they are ahead of everyone else but this is not a competitive thing, it is to ensure that the game's gameplay is the best and so you must have the technology in place. The game is 3D hardware driven as well as software driven. All the creatures are all polygons now and they range from 48 to 80 polygons each. These were kept low so we can have up to 30 creatures on screen in battle without things slowing down. We also have special shadowing and those shadows change brightness depending how light the area is."



Editing

Did the game design document for DK2 reach completion before you started coding?

Nick said, "The old Bullfrog way was a single page concept made, two years later, into a game if we were lucky. It was a try it out and see if it works mentality, which produced some good games. Now we produce more game documents simply because we have to. We have a game day every six months, where everyone has an opportunity to offer his or her ideas for a new game or to improve an existing one. Now we're part of EA, there could be instances of projects being shelved, for whatever reason, because they (EA) have the financial muscle to do that. Other companies have to release everything because they can't afford to simply bin it."

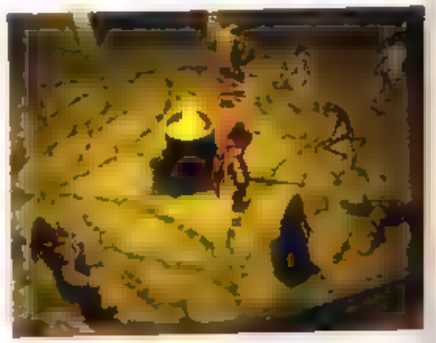
New Bits

"The most innovative feature is the combat system. In the first offering, it was merely a battle of numbers, now there is [illegible] involved and this is where the combat system really takes off. This [illegible] the creature statistics, all the balancing of the game, which is the biggest issue we have worked on to get right. The new fear threat system (this is where creatures give out an amount of fear to other creatures and others then become scared), how creatures rap other creatures, the [illegible] and the stunning of creatures when dropped. The new spells that appear as creatures move up through the ranks have also been well designed. DK2 is a deep game but on the surface you do not have to go in that deep! There are so many features either improved or added it is really a whole new game," Nick Goldsworthy, producer.

VAMPIRE THE MASQUERADE

I usually write features on a number of topics, specialising in product previews and first look exclusives. Every so often an impressive title comes along and then I do a feature called 'In The Studio', which highlights a game that should be given a lot of respect. Vampire: The Masquerade is one such product that has a lot going for it.

GENRE: ROLE PLAYING
DEVELOPER: NIHILISTIC
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
SUPPLIER: MULTIMEDIA WAREHOUSE TEL: 01 [illegible] 000
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 99
INTERNET WWW.ACTIVISION.COM



PREVIEWS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Not explained a bit more ... the plot. "With three ... locations ... truly serious ... New ... made ... the ... phones ... number of high tech

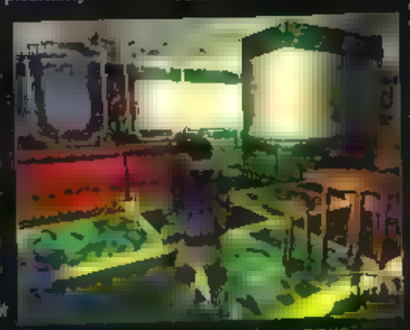
DEREK DELA PAUSE

After the phenomenal success of Metal Gear Solid it was only a matter of time before the inevitable deluge of clones began descending on the PlayStation market. Syphon Filter is another stalk and sniper game that takes all the best ingredients of Metal Gear and cooks up the next big-time covert agent against the terrorist bad guy extravaganza. It's going to be big, so pay attention and don't say we didn't warn you. — RedTide

Syphon Filter

What's in a name

To say that Syphon Filter bears more than a passing resemblance to Metal Gear Solid is somewhat of an understatement, but that's a good thing for any gamers who perhaps found Konami's thrilling terrorist hunt a little too tame for their liking. Syphon Filter is a third person action adventure that tells the story of international terrorist, Erich Khoemer and his skilled team of unpleasant bad guy villains - they plan to unleash the deadly Syphon Filter virus on the unsuspecting United States. To this end the terrorists have planted explosive traps, taken over buildings, captured hostages and hidden viral bombs all over the place, seriously threatening the peace and quite. Enter the predictably named covert operative, Gabriel Logan and his partner Lian Xing, naturally Gabriel is a qualified biochemist as well as a highly trained Special Forces veteran, the question is how do you go from nerdy white lab coat to muscle bound one changing room? Gabriel must now go up against hundreds of well-armed bad guys, burning subway trains, adverse weather conditions and cracks in the pavement in his terrorist-squashing quest, squeezing out one-liners as he goes. Lian Xing plays a supporting role to Gabriel in the game, acting as his link to the outside world, updating his objectives and generally overseeing his progress, offering help and outlining new objectives in well crafted scripted sequences. Initial feelings on the story that holds the action together are mixed, how many times do we have to listen to this saving the world drivel and whatever happened to pure and simple imagination? Although the story is a little shaky the superb introduction movie, excellent voice acting and multiple objective missions structure holds everything together well and comes across convincingly, which is a good thing considering the titles late stage of development.

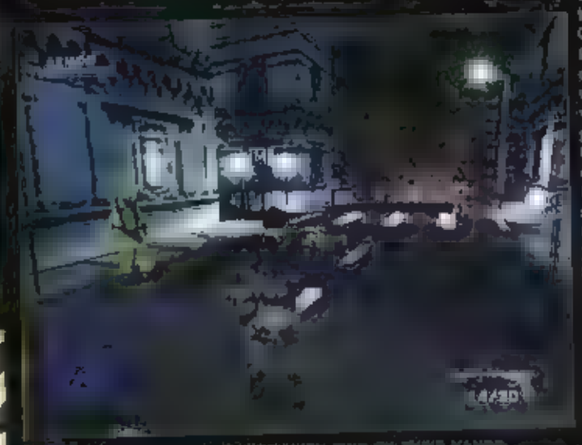


Going places, quietly

The first few missions available in the preview copy proved exhausting to play, even though there are so many different objectives during each mission, the game play did feel somewhat linear. But then again, don't they all. The important thing to remember is that you've got terrorists to take down and a world to save, so get on with it. A typical game scenario starts with you outside the swing urban hall, cars are burning, you can hear someone shouting orders over the radio and then the unmistakable crack of gunfire. Your job here is to take out any terrorists and watch out who you shoot, as friendly fire will end your game. After clearing the rooftops and streets you head underground, your partner radios in explaining that you must disable the power generator before you can enter the subway station. Your mission objective screen is updated, you select your assault rifle and check the map. High above the generator two terrorists stand guard and moving back slowly, you select your sniper rifle. Zooming in and taking careful aim, you pull off two quick head shots and make your way to the generator. After powering down the generator Lian Xing calls you again to tell you she's detected an explosive device. The word exhausting comes to mind here mainly due to the fact that the above little mission involves checking your mission objective log, changing weapons, sniping, dodging bullets while running, aiming and firing (a similar system to Tomb Raider) and making sure you didn't get shot. It's fast paced action all the way and the control system is a pleasure to work with.

Real deal

Syphon Filter looks superb and at first glance you're immediately thinking that it looks very similar to Metal Gear Solid, although the hero in this game sports an unusually handy gait when strafing and running. The environments you play in looks and behaves realistically right down to the very last breakable beer bottle, almost everything can be shot at and will react emerging you further into the game world.



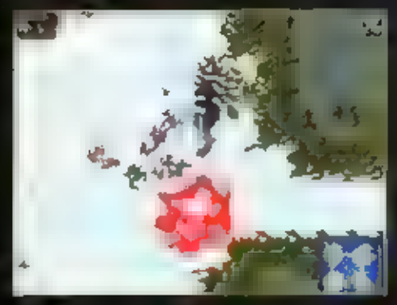
Graphically it's not better than Metal Gear Solid, but could never be called ugly. Bullet holes in the walls, shattering glass and gunshot effects only add to the experience, drawing you further into the game. You'll have to stalk and fight your way through twenty levels as you discover the seriousness of the viral threat. To help you through the game you'll have access to around seventeen different weapons that range from grenade launchers to pistols not forgetting the heart pounding excitement of the sniper rifle. The scene is set and everything is in place, Syphon Filter is going to arrive on our shores within the next few months, we'll have to wait and see if it can dethrone Metal Gear Solid from its position at number one.

GENRE: ACTION STRATEGY
DEVELOPER: TAKE 2 RED STORM
PUBLISHER: INTERPLAY
SUPPLIER: MULTIMEDIA WAREHOUSE
TEL: 0 3 5 1000
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 99
INTERNET: WWW.INTERPLAY.COM

Black Moon Chronicles

Dark omens manifest ... New and terrifying evils are spawned and stalk the land ... The Black Moon has appeared, and the heroes of Light and Justice rise to meet the challenge. We take an early look at Cryo's upcoming release. — Raven

Your task? Very simple – wander the land in an effort to raise a mighty army, then take it and defeat the forces of darkness. This title follows the pattern of a genre that has not, as yet, proven exceptionally popular, but which, nonetheless, has much merit. Some may recall an old game by the name of Fantasy Empires and most of us have at least heard of Lords of Magic and Rage of Mages. The Chronicle of Blackmoon adopts an approach that can best be described as a blend of all of the above, and Shadow of a Horned Rat as well.



The interface is comprised of two parts – an overland map view for cross-country campaign travel, which takes place in turn representing days, and a zoomed in, "real-time strategy" type of interface for dealing with encounters. A small element of role-play has also been incorporated, and not all encounters are necessarily combat engagements. However, don't expect a challenging role-play experience, as this is not the main focus of this game. Rather, recruiting an army and keeping it alive, while growing it from one mission to the next are central to completing this set of campaigns.

A critical factor in this game is advancing all your units, heroes and armsmen alike. Veteran units gain experience, and experience results in enhanced combat effectiveness. The selection of available units, as it stands at the moment, includes cavalry, infantry, pikemen, archers, wizards, priests and various fantastical creatures. The repertoire of opponents is even more diverse, with numerous and diverse monsters to pit your skills against.

Combat does not revolve around building bases, but rather on completing missions and reaping their benefits. Some successfully completed battles result in rewards of gold, others have men joining your ranks. On the battlefield itself, deploying and managing your forces intelligently will win you the game, not building units and throwing them at the enemy. Thus, Black Moon emphasises tactical play, and getting the most effect out of every unit is paramount.

IMPRESSIVE GRAPHICS ENHANCE GAME PLAY

Should you fail a mission, the game does not end. Rather, you proceed to the following mission but without any reward or benefit you may have garnered from victory. This may well decide the outcome of a subsequent battle, or even make it impossible. Unfortunately, the flow of the campaign is totally linear, and thus it may even be impossible to win the game without a perfect record of victories. Hopefully, this situation will be rectified, and a more diversified mission tree implemented.

From a graphical point of view, Black Moon promises to be nothing short of delightful. The landscapes and units are rendered in painstaking detail, and the animations are spectacular. In particular, spell graphics impart the feeling of titanic forces being tossed around the battlefield. The variety of spells is impressive, and each spellcasting class has its own repertoire, from healing and protection-based clerical incantations to squad-shattering wizardry magic. Black Moon also features a very long and beautifully rendered introduction video sequence, which sets the scene and explains the beginning of the story.

I was awed by the soundtrack – no other word describes it better. The music is very atmospheric indeed, with a slightly haunting feel to it. The sound effects are not groundbreaking marvels in any respect, but adequate enough. This being an early beta, these may well be upgraded by the time Black Moon is released.

LONG DISTANCES ARE DEVOURED BY THE OVERLAND MAP

The version we had a look at did not, as yet, support multiplayer, but it did incorporate a "skirmish" mode, which allows a player to choose a map and a force, and pit his wits against the computer. It seems likely that network support will be added, to enable head-to-head or multiplayer gaming. The pre-release version is already packed with four campaigns, over a dozen skirmish maps and numerous "special missions" – challenging scenarios that are definitely not for the faint of heart. At this point, even the beginner campaigns are anything but easy, and it seems that Black Moon will be a very challenging game.

As it stands at the moment, Black Moon is set to shine as a single-player game, with the potential to be a very engrossing multiplayer game too, should networkability be implemented, in the release version. The sound, and game-play addictive, once one has accustomed oneself to the somewhat unusual interface.

GENRE: REAL TIME STRATEGY (PC)
DEVELOPER: CRYO INTERACTIVE
PUBLISHER: CRYO INTERACTIVE
SUPPLIER: MULTIMEDIA WAREHOUSE
TEL: 0 1 3 5 1000
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 99
INTERNET: WWW.CRYO-INTERACTIVE.CO.FR

Tom Clancy's RAINBOW SIX ROGUE SPEAR

Red Storm, the games division that is instrumental in creating action games from the books of Tom Clancy is already working on the sequel, namely Rogue Spear. Information at present is scant about what the new exciting action come strategy game will entail but rumour has it that the plot line to the game will be heavily influenced by the Russian Mafia and the oil crisis!

GENRE: ACTION STRATEGY

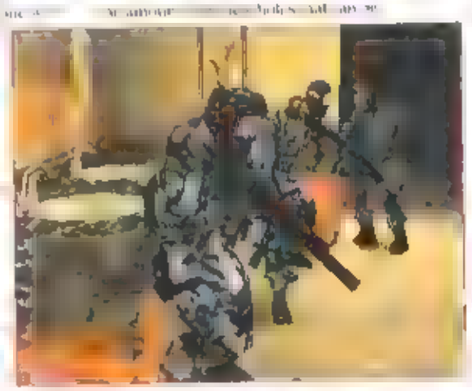
DEVELOPER: TAKE 2 - RED STORM

PUBLISHER: TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE

SUPPLIER: MULTIMEDIA WAREHOUSE
TEL: (011) 315-1000

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 99

INTERNET
WWW.REDSTORM.COM



NAG Rating System

39% - 0%

49% - 40%

59% - 50%

69% - 60%

79% - 70%

89% - 80%

100% - 90%

Ratings - Yay or Nay?

Recent unannounced statements have inferred that South Africa is going to get its own version of the ESRB, or Entertainment Software Rating Board. What is the ESRB? Take a look at your computer game boxes – a small black and white indicator somewhere on the box states it is being suitable for all, adults only, or some similar classification. This is a rating awarded by the ESRB, according to prescribed standards which define certain elements in games.

The establishment of a similar organisation in South Africa will have a definite impact on the local computer game industry, with both positive and negative effects projected. On the good side, control over computer games is one of the ways that the "anti-computer game violence" lobby may be satisfied – provided, of course, that effective control measures are put in place to enforce the decisions made by the proposed organisation.

Another big plus that such an organisation established locally represents is for the South African entertainment software industry itself. The organisation will be able to, through the use of coded stickers and other forms of identification, afford to product boxes, instantly identify pirated software, and clamp down on offenders. Heavy fines and possible prison sentences, according to South African copyright laws, will undoubtedly be the order of the day. The consequential effect on the industry as whole should be a decrease in the price of software, resulting in higher turnovers for distributors and a growth in the local industry as a whole.

So far, not too much bad news for the average legitimate gamer. Theoretically, cheaper, legit software rates in a simple yet effective fashion will be available from every retailer countrywide. The perceived problem comes in with the actual process of analysing and rating of software. Firstly, what kind of standards will be imposed on games? Can we expect a fair and accurate analysis as is proper in our fledgling free society, or will we see the return of a draconian "censorship board" cutting and burning games with gay abandon? With the current debate about software content, this is a distinct possibility that needs to be faced. The wrong kind of structure could seriously harm the computer industry, rather than enhance it.

The next question is one of timing. How long will this organisation take to review and rate new software? Certainly, while these measures are needed, an organisation that will delay the release of new software significantly will once again harm the industry on a local level. Information sources like the Internet make it obvious when games become available overseas, and waiting too long to see them available locally will get South African gamers up in arms before long.

The last matter of concern lies in who exactly will be responsible for the rating of games? Will the organisation be completely independent, or affiliated to official structures? How much say will developers and distributors have? And what kind of experience will those working for the organisation have? NAG hopes to bring you a full report on these new developments shortly. For now, we can only speculate on what might end up being a very powerful, double-edged sword within the local entertainment software industry.

EXTENDABLE

We had no trouble giving Extendable our editor's choice this month. It's adrenaline pumping, trigger-pulling, non-stop action from the word go. It has to be the best arcade action available for the PC.

EDITORS CHOICE

See PG 44

The Awards Ceremony

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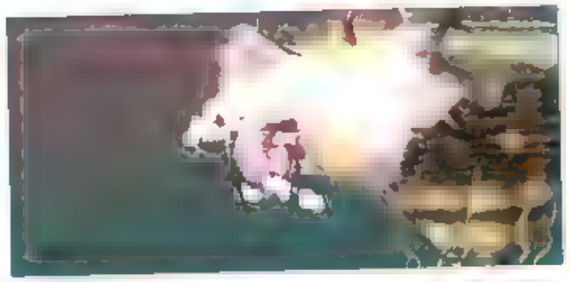
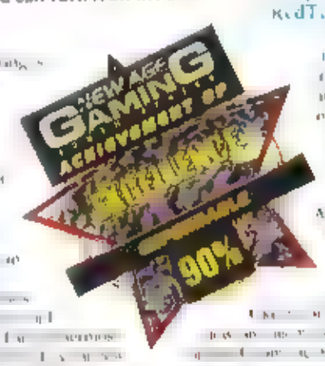
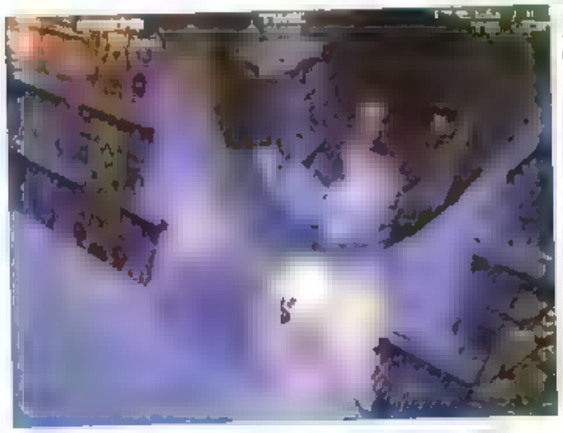


EXPENDABLE

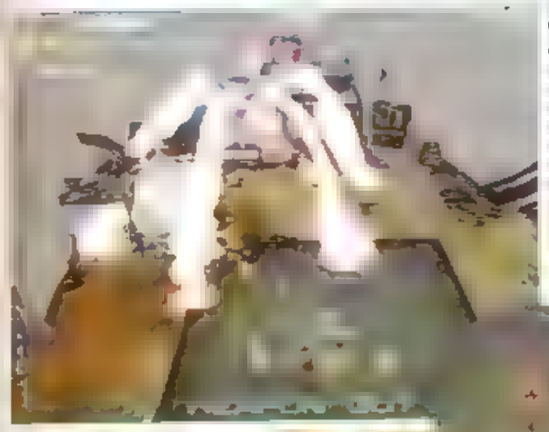
Hopeless naked hostages, a galaxy in bitter turmoil and legions of mindless killing machines sent to set things right - one question, where do I sign up? Rage brings us another masterpiece of gratuitous graphical splendour and mind-numbing mouse-gripping adrenaline-pumping action. Just when you thought it was safe to expose yourself to some more gore and violence Expendable takes things way over the top and well, into the next dimension. Aren't you glad you can turn it all off and hide under your blanket?

RedTide





REVIEWS UNDER FIRE



PC CD-ROM

RedTide

GENRE
Arcade Action

Developer	Publisher	Supplier	RRP
Rage Software	Rage Software	Multimedia Warehouse	R 299.00

http www.rage.co.uk

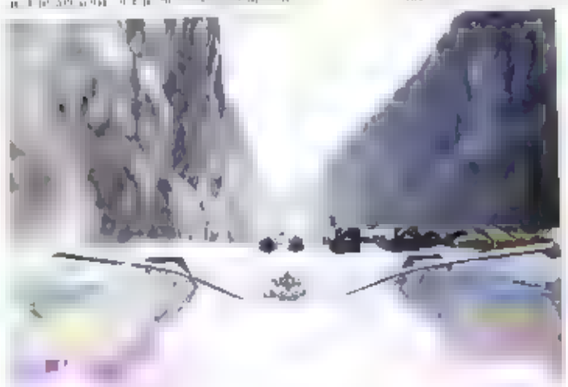
Multiplayer	Competitives	Pros	Cons
Yes	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

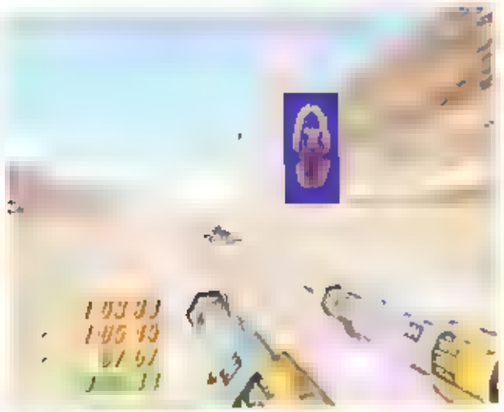
Min Requirements	Recommended
Pentium 200	Pentium II 266
[illegible]	64 MB Ram
[illegible]	[illegible]
3D [illegible]	8MB 3D Card
250 MB [illegible]	700 MB HD
Windows 95 98	Windows 95 98
[illegible]	[illegible]

Graphics	Sound	General	Story	Continuity	Playability
95	91	88	[illegible]	87	93

Amidst the hype and attention given to the release of Star Wars: The Phantom Menace (the movie), gamers are flocking to get their hands on the PC versions of the resultant titles. Undoubtedly there is much to live up to, and with my fellow colleague reviewing the adventure, it was an arduous task that awaited me when Racer landed on my desk. Unsurprisingly, a solid and enjoyable game reared its head and managed to uphold, to a certain extent, the virtues of the 'Force'.

STAR WARS EPISODE I RACER





STORM

GENRE
Arcade Racing

PC CD-ROM

Developer	Publisher	Supplier	RRP
LucasArts	Activision	Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315 1930	R 299.00

http: www.starwars.com

Multiplayer	Competitives	Pro's	Con's
Yes	Wipeout 2097, PSX Powerslide	Excellent game. Perhaps Dynamic Control [illegible]	Bad Track design and interface irritating [illegible]

Min Requirements	Recommended
Pentium 166 32 MB Ram 4 X CD Rom 4 MB DirectX3D 490 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Pentium 200 64 MB Ram 2 X CD Rom 8MB 3D AGP 904 MB HD Windows 95/98 DirectX 6

Graphics	Sound	General	Story	Continuity	Playability
86	89	87	NA	[illegible]	[illegible]

83

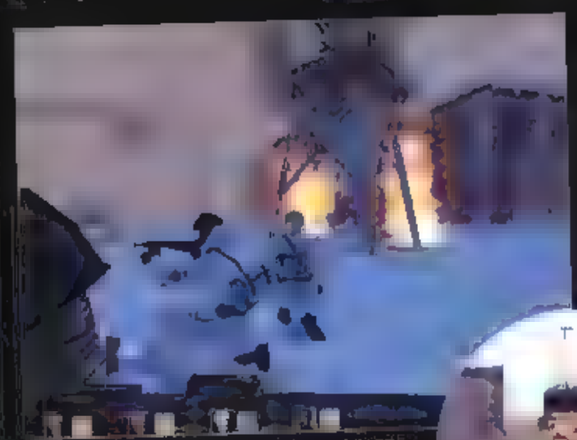
For a first-person shooter to succeed nowadays, game developers must produce a game that will really grab the attention of the gamer, and in such a way that they'll keep coming back for more. Illusion Softworks have done just that with Hidden & Dangerous.

—Mennocli

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS

The game plays out in the early 1940's during WW2, where your team consists of elite Allied soldiers. At the beginning of each campaign, the player has the option to hand pick eight out of forty fine men, each with their own attributes. Characters' abilities vary in the fields of shooting accuracy, strength, endurance etc, that gives each one it's own personality. Should one of your soldiers get killed during a mission, the soldier will be dead throughout the game, but the worst part is that you will also now have one less character to finish the current campaign with. For each mission one can pick four characters, so choose them wisely.

Hidden & Dangerous marries the genres of first person, third person and action-strategy into one neat package, and it works quite well. This leaves the player to adapt his/her personal playing style, so there is more than one way to skin a cat in this game, adding to the re-playability in so many ways. The first-person view is the most effective way to play, but be warned. Control of your character can take some getting used to, as your weapon will bob up and down while running, making accuracy almost non existent. Rather go prone or lie down flat when shooting, thus increasing your firing accuracy, and producing a smaller target for Jerry to shoot at. Third-person mode is more effective for covering ground fast, and for scanning around corners. One can choose to switch on the crosshair for this mode, but more than once I was peeking around a corner when a German soldier spotted me, coming around the corner. My crosshair was all over the place, and he got such a fright as well (they call that luck), and it took three badly placed rifle shots at point-blank to bring this guy down. After the first mission I realized this was going be a tough one.



DID ANYONE BRING MY STEALTH SNOWBOARD?

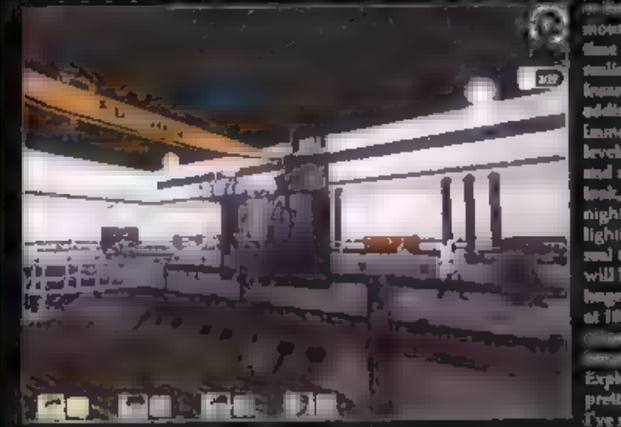
BREAKING AMUNI

Where Rainbow Six offered control of squad mates via a mission planning screen before the mission started, Hidden & Dangerous sports an in-game mission planner, which can be accessed at any time. The map is presented as a 3D terrain, much like the real terrain in the game, [illegible] with [illegible]

From this panel, orders can be given to your squad, and it can range from simple movement commands, to a co-ordinated strike from different directions. One can even use the command sliders to set the timing of each of the operations, tell your squad mates to change weapons or use objects. This form of mission planning is a great asset in this type of game, as the situation can change rapidly, making initial plans obsolete in most cases. The idea of Hidden & Dangerous derives a lot from Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines, as each one of your characters will have different abilities, and each one can be switched to at any time. The artificial intelligence will take over as soon as the player switches over to the next soldier. I must admit that the AI is much better than anything we've seen before, and although there are a few rough edges, the overall way it is done must be commended. The enemy will hunt you down when you are spotted, and will go prone when shot at. While sneaking up to them, try not to make too much noise, as "Achtung! Engländer!" will alert the enemy to your presence, making life difficult or very short. German Soldiers will fire relentlessly, changing magazines, and will move closer till they kill their target. Some shoot extremely well, while others will have difficulty hitting their target, which means that no two Germans have the same attributes either. Nevertheless, the enemy AI is deadly even at the easier levels, and it really takes careful planning not to lose a squad member during a mission.

GUNS

Another great feature of Hidden & Dangerous is the hardware. You get a lot of weapons to play around with, from pistols, rifles, sniper rifles, sub-machine guns, machine guns, grenades, mines, bazookas, knives, binoculars and even a flare gun. The strength of a character dictates how much it can actually carry, and it makes sense to give a soldier with 100% shooting accuracy a sniper rifle. As previously mentioned, weapons can be fired in the third-person view, although better results will be achieved in first person. The weapons are fully 3D, and can be aimed through the sights of the weapon, giving a real authentic feel to them. One can also use a crosshair, but the weapon will not be displayed. The sniper rifle features a zoomable scope, which makes for easy picking of targets. Should you run out of ammo, scavenge weapons off dead soldier's bodies. At the end of a campaign, I usually have more German hardware than the stuff I started off with. The best part is that the environment is totally interactive. Need to cover distance fast? Climb into a vehicle with your entire squad, and drive there! This applies to boats and tanks as well, making for very interesting situations.

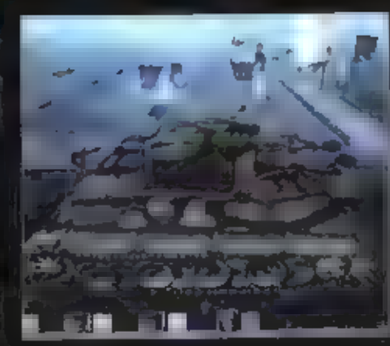


THERE GUYS SEEM A BIT CONFUSED

THIS GAME HAS GONE BY THE BEST GRAPHICS SEEN YET.

LAST WORD

Saving the best for last, the graphics in Hidden & Dangerous are to die for. The campaigns will take you through some breathtaking scenery [illegible] mountains and night time are all done very realistically with the beauty engine, adding even more to immersion. Some levels incorporate fog and rain with that wet look, others will be at night, where the lighting looks like the real thing. Then there will be levels with huge open areas, and at 1024x768 32-bit [illegible] Explosions are the prettiest I've seen in a game, with flames shooting into the air, leaving the object burning for quite some time. I was totally overwhelmed by the authentic and realistic feel of Hidden & Dangerous, and although some of the missions are very difficult and can take a few hours to complete, it kept me coming back for more. Featuring co-operative multiplayer, this title is sure to become a favourite amongst gamers of all genres.



GUNS ARE THERE, HOWEVER, MORE THAN JUST A SUPPLEMENT

ARCHIVES

GENRE
Action Strategy

Min Requirements	Recommended
[illegible]	[illegible]

PC CD-ROM

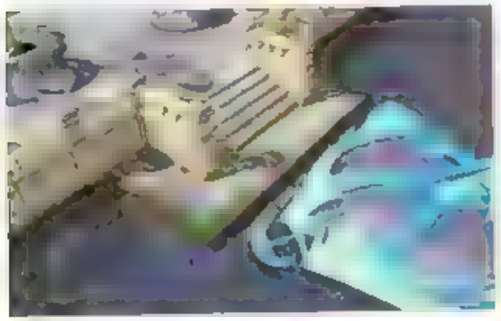
Developer	Publisher	Supplier	RRP
Illusion Softworks	Illusion Softworks	[illegible]	R 299.00

http://www.illusionsoftworks.com

Multiplayer	Competitive	Pros	Cons
Yes	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability
94	90	[illegible]	85	92	[illegible]

Cue dramatic John Williams orchestral opus, lights, camera and action... 'There has been a great disturbance in the force, it felt like a hundred thousand gamers all cried out at once and then were silent.' Cut. Largely due to the movie's status, there have been few eagerly anticipated titles in the history of computer gaming as The Phantom Menace. It's a wonderful opportunity that has been sadly wasted.



STAR WARS
EPISODE I
THE PHANTOM MENACE™

PC CD-ROM

GENRE
Action Adventure

Phantom Menace [illegible] terrible game. Has many excellent qualities but somehow when all these parts are put together [illegible] up. [illegible] short it will be remembered for what it could have been and not what it is.

Developer	Publisher	Supplier	RRP
Big Ape Productions	[illegible]	Ultimate Multimedia [illegible]	R 299.00

http://www.starwars.com

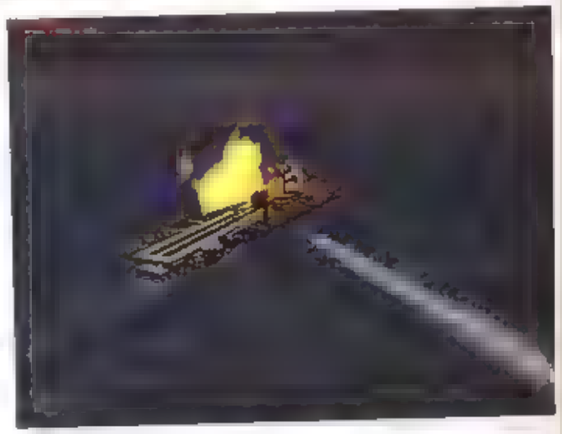
Multiplayer	Competitives	Pro's	Cons
No	Jedi Knight III	[illegible]	[illegible]

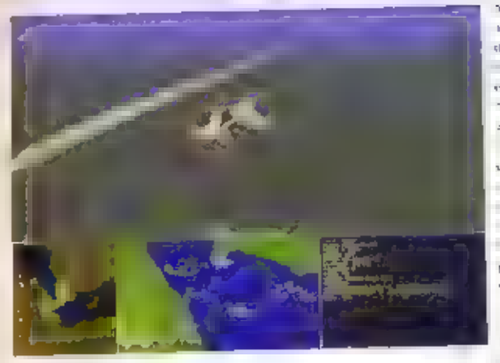
Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability
[illegible]	86	[illegible]	90	57	88

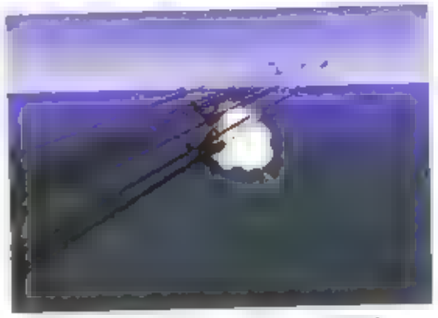
79

Earlier this year, when the US forces attacked IRAQ in Operation Desert Fox, CNN used an early version of a Jane's Combat Simulations title to demonstrate the movement of the US naval forces during this conflict, stunning thousands of viewers worldwide with the accuracy and realism of the simulation. Jane's Fleet Command is finally on the shelves, and ready for the public to experience the thrill of naval warfare first hand.

Jane's FLEET COMMAND







MEMNOCH

GENRE
Naval Strategy

PC CD-ROM

Developer:	Publisher:	Supplier	RRP
Jane's Combat Simulations	Electronic Arts	Electronic Arts Africa	R 399.00

http://www.janes-ea.com

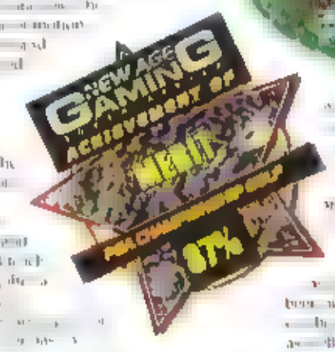
Multiplayer	Competitives	Pros	Cons
Yes	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

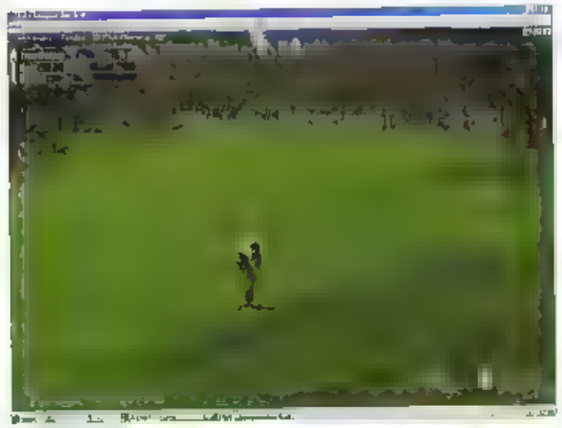
Min Requirements	Recommended
[illegible]	[illegible]

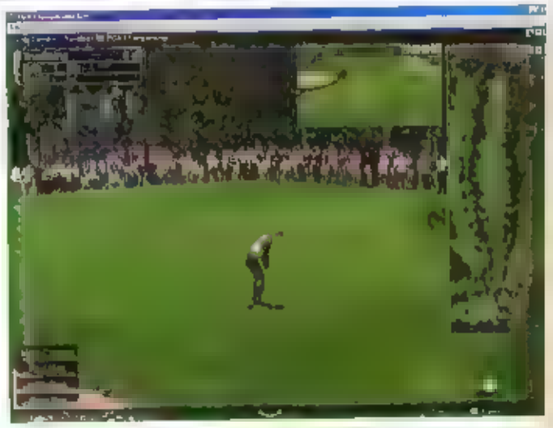
Graphics	Sound	General	Story	Continuity	Playability
89	95	[illegible]	NA	92	90

PGA CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF

With the US Open Championships on the go and the golf gaming world starting to get an itch for better things, Sierra Sports is getting in on the act with the release of PGA Championship Golf. Going back into the history books to see what similar products have been released by Sierra Sports you will find the infamous Front Page Sports Golf range. Not a bad attempt at recreating the sport on the PC and the first to offer the mouse mechanism as a swing option. - [illegible]







Developer	Publisher	Supplier	RRP
Sierra Sports	Havas Sierra	[illegible]	R 299.00

http://www.sierra.com

Multiplayer	Competitives	Pros	Cons
Yes	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability
90	82	83	NA	92	87

PC CD-ROM

STORM

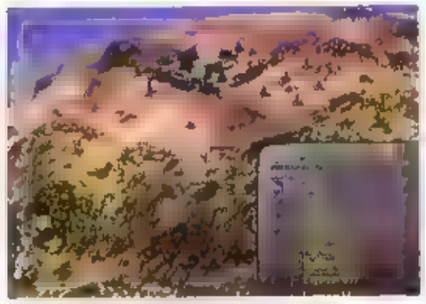
GENRE
GOLF SIMULATION

Min Requirements	Recommended
[illegible]	Pentium II 266
32 MB Ram	64 MB Ram
[illegible]	[illegible]
640 x 480 VGA	320 x 200 SVGA
8 MB HD	0 MB HD
Windows 95/98	Windows 95/98
DirectX 6	DirectX 6.1

Online gaming is becoming more popular every day and more and more companies are taking the plunge and developing their own online persistent worlds. Most of these worlds tend to the fantasy RPG area of gaming. So far very few companies have even considered any other direction. Up steps Cryo Interactive and Vibes to create an online Sci-Fi universe with 900 million planets and more strategy and economics than actual role playing. This game is Mankind. - Soul Assas

MANKIND

I can't say that I have been too overwhelmingly pleased with any of Cryo Interactive's last few projects but I must admit that Mankind did peak my interest first. The basis of the game is a huge galaxy with 900 million planets and two opposing empires fighting for control of [illegible]



Mankind is unique in the way that it will be also hosted a [illegible] fantasy back [illegible] which will help [illegible] game which should be released [illegible] and can take [illegible] they decide the [illegible] the promise of Mankind they [illegible] access key and enjoy one [illegible] of gaming on the Mankind servers. In addition the game will also be supported as a boxed [illegible] selected [illegible] anyone that purchases [illegible] these will get free [illegible] Mankind. I think most people will opt for the shareware version first due to the fact that [illegible] best to chase it.

This is good news if you don't [illegible]

[illegible] Mankind is an [illegible] game and has many [illegible] missing. Some essential [illegible] making, saving, the game and [illegible]

quote he [illegible] from the actual Mankind manual. "Mankind is a state [illegible] of a spaceport, an imperial city. When you, the player, enter into the universe of Mankind, you will be offered several [illegible] ships and buildings [illegible]

[illegible] and hopefully [illegible] which will help [illegible] game.

Scientist hopefully [illegible] to [illegible] the planet [illegible] Earth but Cryo haven't [illegible] and the states for release [illegible] patch. Imagine playing on a [illegible] there are missions with [illegible] but Cryo there [illegible] yet.

The setting [illegible] another point the mind [illegible] Mankind [illegible] have [illegible] myself [illegible] processors [illegible] to get Mankind [illegible] the [illegible] asks such as looking around [illegible] descriptions of buildings [illegible] ships and general [illegible] one other [illegible]

[illegible] an purchase a [illegible] only halfway decent [illegible] about Mankind [illegible] the [illegible] Mankind [illegible] look at Mankind and [illegible] purchase it. In essence [illegible] is still in its beta stages and has a lot of [illegible]

The reason is that Mankind is an online [illegible] game and has many [illegible] missing. Some essential [illegible] making, saving, the game and [illegible]

their activities throughout Mankind. Unlike most other online games, the game doesn't stop [illegible] you decide to leave. While [illegible] ships and buildings [illegible]

SOUL ASSASSIN

GENRE
Strategy

Min Requirements	Recommended
Pentium 166	Pentium 200
32 MB Ram	64 MB Ram
8 X CD-Rom	[illegible]
4 MB Svga Video	[illegible]
70 MB HD	70 MB HD
Windows 95/98	Windows 95/98
[illegible]	Direct X 6

PC CD-ROM

Developer: Vibes
Publisher: Cryo Interactive
Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000
RRP: R 299.00

help www.[illegible].net

Multiplayer	Competitives	Pro's	Con's
Yes	VLA Fleets	Huge [illegible] World, Good Graphics	[illegible]

Persistent gaming management game falls in many areas. The product is still unfinished and [illegible]

Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability
[illegible]	NA	60	63	42	42

The late sixties were, without a doubt, an interesting time to be alive - at least, this is what I am told. What with the dawning of a whole new type of society and the birth of an entire new culture, they certainly were interesting times. Music was changing, and the world was changing with it; attitudes began to vary, lifestyles altered, and girls started wearing skirts that ended way above their knees. These were times of experimentation, of exploration and of change. But, despite all the new elements that entered into life in this time, certain things stayed the same. Crime was rampant, and street gangs prevailed in the London underworld. Which, by way of the scenic route, brings us more or less to the point. - Shrike

Mission Pack #1: London 1969

[illegible] the first Grand Theft Auto [illegible]

[illegible] great, the sounds get on [illegible] and game play is [illegible] However aside of [illegible]

[illegible] GTA except for the addition of a [illegible] game play mode. This will [illegible] of course, seeing as how they have to play the game in the old [illegible] which [illegible] character" mode. [illegible] pack. Hmm, [illegible] Theft Auto [illegible]

[illegible] cannot determine it is [illegible] addictive. It seems that the simplistic game play and [illegible]

NAG

Pro's: New 3D Mode
All New Look
Highly Addictive Game
Con's: Very Difficult to Control
Annoying Sound Effects
Comp: Grand Theft Auto
R 249.00 (RRP)
Red Storm Entertainment
www.redstorm.com
Multimedia Warehouse
(011) 315-1000

PC CD-ROM

Futuristic sporting events always seem to have some kind of violent edge to them, at least according to the science fiction writers out there. This, of course, does not say much for our society. What with violent games like rugby and American football, and other unsavoury elements like football hooliganism and the cancellation of cool TV programmes in favour of sport coverage, it's a wonder that society hasn't crumbled into complete and irreversible anarchy! One wonders whether turning sports into violent pursuits indicates the decline of an already bloodthirsty establishment but enough waxing philosophical. On with the review. - Shrike

E[illegible] Arena happens [illegible]

[illegible] drawing board [illegible] busy in the average sports game. There is no time [illegible] arbitrarily flung sticks of dynamite [illegible] play more than is warranted. And Savage Arena does not feature the easy [illegible] start [illegible]

The computer doesn't give any quarter [illegible] game [illegible] going to play it, make sure [illegible]

[illegible] level defeats. It goes so bad [illegible] the game actually becomes [illegible] multiple [illegible] cut setting the [illegible] trivial bonus and [illegible] enough [illegible]

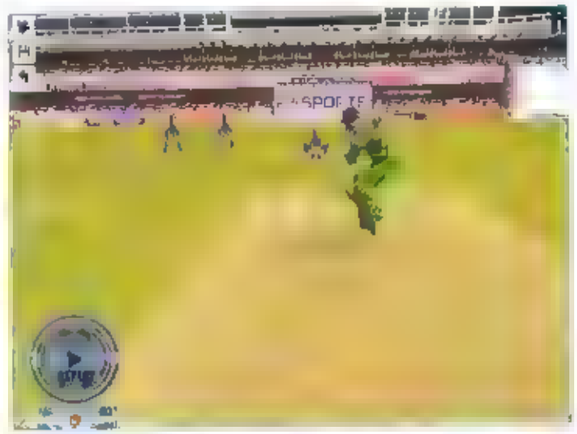
[illegible] what good is looking pretty if you keep getting trounced by an unrelenting AI after a [illegible] This [illegible] Maybe it's just me, but [illegible] CD-ROM drive. This is really a game that need [illegible]

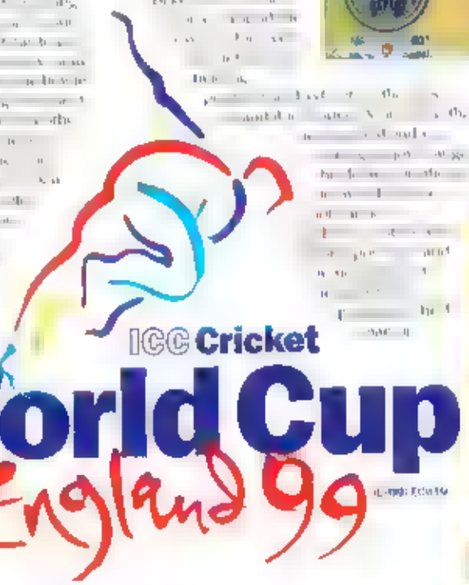
NAG

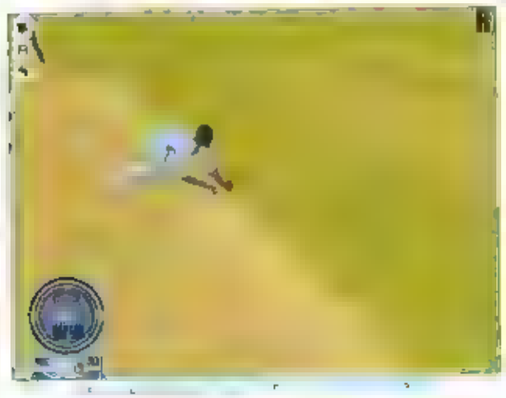
Pro's: Impressive Sound
Fairly Good Graphics
Con's: Unforgiving AI
Annoying Game Play
Difficult to Control
Comp: Speedball
R 249.00 (RRP)
Red Storm Entertainment
www.redstorm.com
Multimedia Warehouse
(011) 315-1000

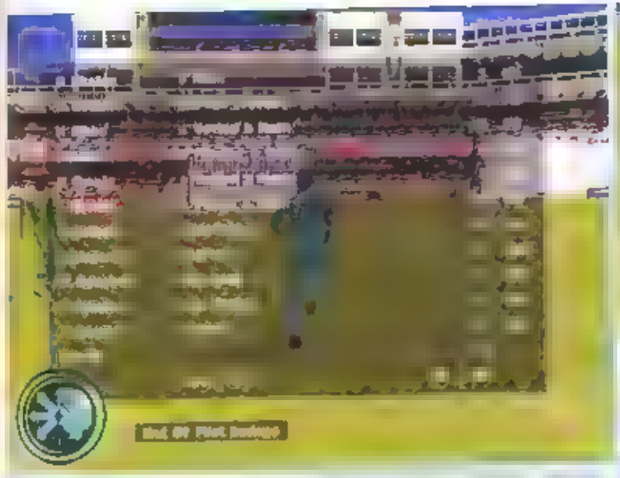
PC CD-ROM

With the Cricket World Cup now but a painful memory, it's little surprise that Electronic Arts timed its release to coincide with the event. EA usually have the knack of signing the official licenses with supreme precision and timing. But after watching South Africa fail on two occasions to dominate the Aussies and eventually crumble under the pressure of the semi final, the bitter taste in my mouth has been sweetened by the ability to recreate the exact match and actually make a meal out of them.









STORM

GENRE
Cricket Simulation

PC CD-ROM

Min Requirements | Recommended

Developer | Publisher | Supplier | RRP

http://www.ea.com.za

Multiplayer: Yes | Competitive | Pros | Cons

Graphics	Sound	Gameplay	Story	Continuity	Playability	
92		85	NA		69	79

Earth - We follow the precepts of our father. One so may a when stee and mana suffice, or a master and shown wi l to law. We keep the aw. Our armies unforce .l

Fire

- We rank the unknown. We find knowledge and power hidden from ordinary minds. Through skill and study, we will attain the impossible and the world will tremble

HONOR, VENGEANCE, HOPE, TERROR.

Four Kingdoms, four creeds. Four immortal siblings have fought for 1500 years to rule the land of Darien. But one of the rivals discovers an ancient artifact, and it shatters the balance of power overnight. Massive armies collide. Supernatural forces level entire cities. Chaos destroys the land and the stability of the universe is shaken forever.

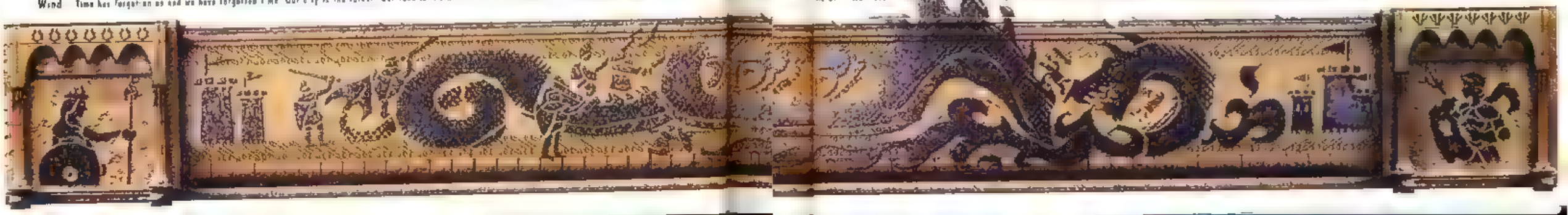
Features

- Four unique sides with different build hierarchies
- Hardware support for improved graphics and special effects
- Rich, in-depth story and character development
- Physical changes in veteran units
- Lay siege to castles and cities
- Non-Player humans, wandering monsters and life forms
- Pre-built multiplayer bases and/or units
- Multiplayer missions & varied victory conditions
- Switchable radar/main map view
- Custom keyboard mapping
- Multiplayer capabilities over LAN, TCP/IP, modem and Internet

Wind - Time has forgotten us and we have forgotten time. Our city is the forest. Our road is the wind. Those who visit our shores unprepared will perish

Water

Water - We travel the [illegible] We [illegible] seven sights our siblings can only imagine. Faraway lands share their secrets with us. We explore. We discover. We build our wealth



The sequel to KKND involves three nations warring for world domination and neither side will give up till either its enemies and/or the world has been destroyed. The same plot has been used in countless other games and sci-fi movies al ko, but no one seems to realise it's getting old, as are numerous other aspects of Krossfire

KKND 2 KROSSFIRE

graphics are virtually identical to

MADMAN

GENRE
Real Time Strategy

Controller Support | Optional Extras

Developer	Publisher	Supplier	RRP
Melbourne House			

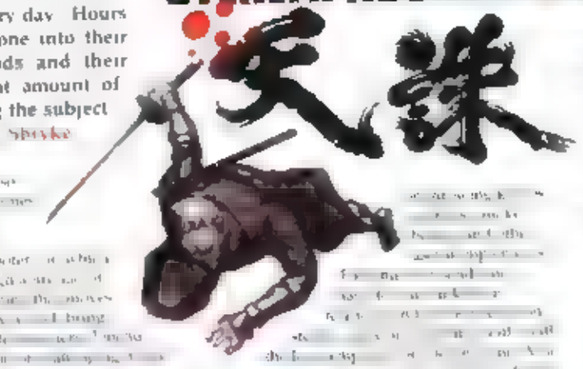
http: www.melbournehouse.com

Multiplayer	Competitives	Pros	Cons
Yes			

Graphics	Sound	General	Story	Continuity	Playability
61	51	53	69	68	59

The mysterious killers of ancient Japan, the shadowy members of the Ninja Clans, have been the subject of many books, movies and games. Their incredible ability to hide in shadows and stealthily enter and leave heavily guarded establishments made them the stuff of wonder amongst their peers - a fascination that continues to this very day. Hours of research have gone into their ways, their methods and their beliefs, and a great amount of material concerning the subject is available today. - Shryke

TENCHU
STEALTH ASSASSINS



SHRYKE

GENRE
Fighting Game

Controller Support | Optional Extras

Developer	Publisher	Supplier	RRP
Activision	Activision	Mastervision Warehouse	R 429.00

http: www.activision.com

Multiplayer	Competitives	Pros	Cons
No	Bakai Bazz		

Graphics	Sound	General	Story	Continuity	Playability
61	63		85	85	

74

The whole thing with racing games, see, is the fact that there are just so damn many of them. And, as is the case with all kinds of saturation, the addition of more racing games to the pool merely serves to dilute the mix even further - effectively removing the impact that these games have on their players. Of course, there are exceptions to the rule. These are few and far between, true, but they do occur. These are the few shining examples of racing games that bend the rules, explore new avenues, and generally push the limit just a little bit. Tank Racer is such a game.

Shryke

TANK RACER

So what makes Tank Racer different? Well, there are a number of points to consider. Firstly, rather than driving around in stunning, state-of-the-art speed machines, you're crammed into a clunky tank. Admittedly, these tanks are faster than your average armoured destruction craft, but it would be pretty bland racing tanks around a track at 30 kph. The very fact that you are sitting in a tank adds the next point of interest to the game. By default, driving around in a vehicle with a 38 pound cannon strapped to it gives you the ability to blow the living daylights out of everything around you, and Tank Racer takes full advantage of this. Finally, chuck some wacky, bumpy, windy tracks into the mix, and you are left with a game of vehicular mayhem that ranks up there with the best of them.

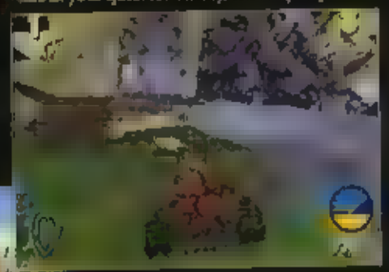
Tank Racer sends the player whirling around various precarious tracks in either one or two player mode. The aim, obviously, is to win the race. To this end, the player is granted full control over his weapon turret, which can be turned to the left or right through a full 360-degree arc - and, of course, fired at opponents. Unfortunately, shooting an opponent does not blow him to kingdom come. It does, however, slow him down, adding to the fun of the game. Various weapon power ups are available on the tracks, including mines, homing missiles, turbo boosts and alien abduction markers (don't ask) which enhance the mayhem of the game.

Tank Racer is a fairly good-looking game, with terrain that is bright, cheery, and destructible! You can drive through walls and over parked cars in your quest for victory, should you prefer to deviate from the track. Minimal deviation is possible, making tactics like ambushes and the like possible, if you like wasting time waiting for opponents rather than careening around the track. The game is packed full of bangs, booms and roaring engines; enough to whip the insanity up to fever pitch.

Controlling the tank takes a little getting used to, and the tank's performance depends heavily on the model that you selected at the start of the race. However, once you have it right, the game is maniacally funny and a great deal of fun. Using the controller is simple, once you have the various control functions down - it seems that the designers wanted.

fun and not an technical difficulty when it comes to Tank Racer, which is absolutely fine by me. The fact that the game is not complicated in the control department allows the player to immerse himself in game-play without worrying about what his hands are doing.

Tank Racer is fast and furious fun, as well as being highly addictive. Some of the normal laws of physics seem to have been suspended for the benefit of the game, adding to the fun, almost cartoon element of the whole situation. It is a racing game with a difference - a definite breath of fresh air in a somewhat stale genre. Serious car simulator enthusiasts may find Tank Racer mildly annoying, particularly if they take life too seriously. However, the average game player will more than likely be captured by Tank Racer's offbeat charm and wide appeal.



TONS OF POWER-UPS LITTER EACH LEVEL

SHOOT WHEREVER'S IN FRONT OF YOU!

New Age Gaming Exclusive Give away

[illegible] has kindly sponsored 50 demo copies of Tank Racer for the Playstation. We will be giving away the demos to the first 50 Playstation owners that write in to get moving. Address your letters to: New Stuff, PO Box 2749, Alberton, 1449. E-mail: [illegible]

SHRYKE

GENRE
Tank Racing

Developer	Publisher	Supplier	RRP
Glass Ghost	Grolier Interactive	Multimedia Warehouse [illegible]	R 429.00

http://tankracer.grolier.co.uk

Multiplayer	Competitives	Pros	Cons
Yes	Running Wild	Great Addictive Fun	Very Average Too Easy

Controller Support: [illegible]
Optional Extras: [illegible]

Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability
67	61	[illegible]	NA	63	[illegible]

[illegible]

What can be said about Bruce Willis that hasn't already been said? The ultimate nice guy action hero, "Bruce" has a following of millions of fans who flock to his movies around the world. And he has done it all. Action, drama, comedy... you name it, Bruce has been in it. Now he appears as the "star" of Apocalypse, a game from Activision.

Shryke

APOCALYPSE

So how did they do it? Mr Willis was motion captured and digitally turned before being turned into Trey Kincaid, the anti-hero of this gloomy game. Then, just for good measure, Activision had Bruce record a whole bunch of phrases and comments, which are flung around during the course of the game with gay abandon. What this creates is a feeling of actually directing Bruce in a sci-fi action film of note.

Apocalypse is a tale of the end of the world, as brought about by a rather disturbed scientist who "creates" the four horsemen of the Apocalypse in a quasi-religious, semi-scientific ritual. Naturally, he is the nice kind of guy who wants to bring about the end of the world and, just as naturally, only one man can stop him. Enter Trey Kincaid, his former student and mass-physicist of note. A convicted criminal, the game kicks off with an excellent cut scene of Kincaid being sentenced to death and attempting a breakout. Thereafter, the game hurls the player into a world of violence as Kincaid blasts his way out of prison, through sewer systems, rampages down city streets and surreal war factories. There is no thought here and no remorse - in Apocalypse you kill everything that moves.

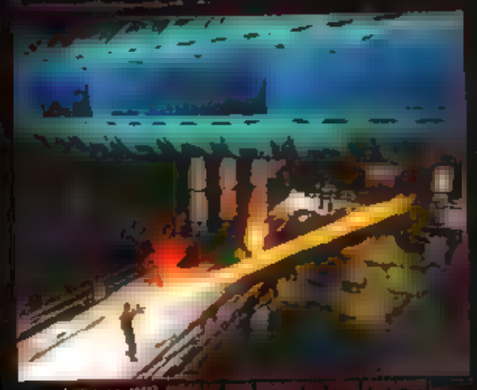
And there is a hell of a lot of moving stuff, aiming at how Kincaid is an escaped convict.

Everybody wants him dead, and most people try to get him that way. This creates a strange irony within the game - he has to destroy those who he is supposed to save, in order to save them. Okay, down to the nitty gritty.

Apocalypse is, quite simply, a third person blaster game. Literally. Blast everything in sight, and you should get through it okay. The story line is pretty linear, without much variation in the way the levels are to be completed - every now and then an alternate path will be opened to the player, but these are rare, and always lead to the same place.

Graphically, Apocalypse is one of the best I've seen. The game is beautifully put together, with stunning backdrops for the well-modelled characters to wander around on. The motion of the characters, too, is well handled, and people familiar with Bruce Willis will recognise more than just his voice when mimicking Kincaid. Even his mannerisms and actions are perfectly mimicked by this game. Even the camera angles are used in a very effective fashion. The camera is far from being static during game play; it swings, zooms out, zooms in and changes angles quite often. This takes a bit of getting used to, but when you're in the groove with the moving view, it enhances the game tenfold.

Controlling Kincaid couldn't be simpler. Obviously movement is controlled by the rocker switch, while the four main control buttons do nothing more than fire in different directions. The "front" buttons on the controller handles other functions, such as jumping, crouching, changing weapons and firing the all powerful, screen-clearing smart bomb. On to the sound effects and music. Quite simply, they're great. Bruce's constant comments are quite amusing, and the ambient effects are stunningly handled. The game is well supplied with health bonuses and weapon changes, including Rip Lasers, guided missiles, particle beams, flame throwers and grenades, to name but a few. The game works on a check point system - each time you die, you respawn at the last checkpoint you passed. You may only save at the end of each level, which can get a bit annoying, but shouldn't cause too many problems for the average player. All in all Apocalypse is a violent, non-stop blast-a-rama of fun. Definitely worth while having.



SHRYKE

GENRE
Arcade Action

Developer	Publisher	Supplier	RRP
Activision	Activision	[illegible]	R 429.00

http://www.activision.com

Multiplayer	Competitives	Pros	Cons
No	[illegible]	[illegible]	Sight Minded

Controller Support: [illegible]
Optional Extras: [illegible]

Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability
[illegible]	87	85	[illegible]	85	86

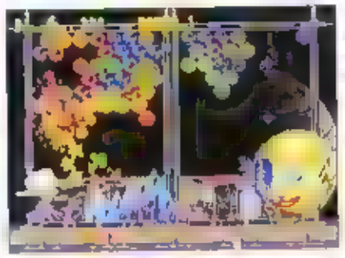
84

Just how far you can take a concept is often explored and exploited by game developing companies to the upper limits of endurance. Judging from the look of things, rainbow coloured bubbles seem to be quite a hit in some circles. Isn't it amazing what some people call entertainment?

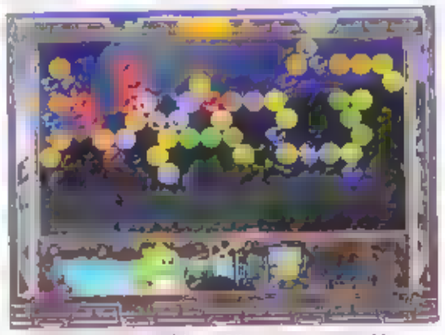
Red Tide

Bust-A-Move 4

Seven colourful bubbles



Eating a chain reaction



Do you're left with what exactly?

RedTide

Genre
Puzzle Game

Controller Support | Optional Extras

Developer	Publisher	Supplier	RRP
Taito	Acclaim	Multimedia Warehouse (011) 314 1000	R 379.00

http://www.acclaim.com

Multiplayer	Competitives	Pro's	Con's
Yes	Tetris, Bubble Bobble	[illegible]	Lacks Single Play [illegible]

Graphics	Sound	General	Story	Continuity	Playability
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	63	88	89

PlayStation™ Platinum

BINARY BLOODSHED

COMPUTER GAMING LEAGUES: THE EVOLUTION

New Kids on the Block

NAG investigates the Next Generation 3D Acceleration Chipsets and comes up with some surprising results.

THINGS ARE [illegible] UP AS THE MAKERS OF TODAY'S 3D ACCELERATION CHIPSETS TO MANUFACTURE [illegible] THERE IS [illegible] ABOUT [illegible] THAT HAVE [illegible] ALL MY YEARS [illegible] PLAYING GAMES [illegible] THAT THEY GET VERY [illegible] ATTACHED TO BRANDS [illegible] PRODUCTS AND ARE ALMOST [illegible] ABOUT THEIR [illegible] THE MARKETING [illegible] WITH THEIR VERY COOL [illegible] NVIDIA WITH THE NEW TNT 2 CHIPSET AS WELL AS 3DFX WITH THE HAVANA CHIPSET [illegible] ALL CANNOT AIM AT THEM EACH [illegible] THESE [illegible] ARE THE BETWEEN [illegible] AND WEAKER [illegible] BUT TAKEN AS A WHOLE THE [illegible] NEXT GENERATION [illegible] EXCEPTIONAL [illegible] HAS BEEN [illegible] AWAY FROM FRAME [illegible] SECOND TO [illegible] QUALITY. LET'S [illegible] THE REAL [illegible] YOU REALLY [illegible] FPS? NOT [illegible] PRETTY [illegible] ARE BEAUTIFUL [illegible] HAVE HEARD MANY [illegible] WHOLE MAINTAINING AT 60+ FPS AT 800x600 WHICH HAS BECOME THE STANDARD RESOLUTION FOR HIGH GAMES. ALSO [illegible] THE EYE [illegible] MOVING AWAY FROM FPS [illegible] ONE OF THE MAIN [illegible] COMMENTING FACTORS WHEN [illegible] TO PURCHASE A CARD.

BELOW WE HAVE A LOOK AT ACTUAL [illegible] AND WHAT THEY [illegible] MUST DIA [illegible] THESE [illegible] ARE TAKING [illegible] ORAP [illegible] NEW HOPE OF TODAY'S [illegible] BETTER [illegible] THAN THE [illegible] AND VICE VERSA BUT AT THE [illegible] THE DAY EA [illegible] MAKES BIG [illegible] ADVANCE [illegible] AREA OF 3D ACCELERATION.

I think the company that has generated the most controversy with their new chipset would have to be 3Dfx. Since the merger between 3Dfx and STB they have dropped all outsourcing of 3Dfx chipsets and the cards are now produced, marketed and sold internally under the 3Dfx brand and manufactured by STB, so don't hide your boxes in for a Creative Voodoo3 or Diamond Monster 3, [illegible] now happen.

This has really irked off a lot of 3Dfx supporters and a few have even [illegible] into other chipsets so that they can stay with their preferred card [illegible]

Both the Voodoo3 2000 and Voodoo3 3000 [illegible] the Voodoo3 V3/2K and V3/3K) ship in an AGP configuration, unfortunately only the V3/2K ships in a PCI configuration. This is good news [illegible] motherboards without [illegible]

The Voodoo 3 has turning out to be a worthy competitor on the graphics market and the cards emulate the previous 3Dfx Banshee being a 2D/3D-display solution. On the 2D side the Voodoo3 3000 ships with a 300MHz RAMDAC and the Voodoo3 3000 with a 350MHz RAMDAC offering a maximum resolution of 2046 x 1536 at 75Hz.

It is a [illegible] and dandy but 2D has become less of an issue so all these chipsets support high quality 2D modes at decent refresh rates. The [illegible] difference between cards in their new generation is the difference in speed. The Voodoo3 2000 has a clock speed of 143MHz [illegible] the 3000 has a clock speed of 166MHz. We benchmarked all the products at these speeds and didn't overclock them due to the uncertainty and risk of overclocking [illegible] the new Voodoo3 chipset [illegible] transfers. With the [illegible] board that this achieves, [illegible] can't but help wonder why they only put 16MB on the board instead of 32MB? It would have made more sense to put 32MB on the card using this technology. The upcoming Voodoo3 3500 will ship with 32MB but this card is yet to be released [illegible] performance [illegible] well [illegible] It gave us the highest FPS [illegible] of all the chipsets. This brings up a sticky point though. The Voodoo3 has the Voodoo2 has a texture limit of 256 x 256 and Quake 3 calls with these limits. In comparison the TNT2 and Savage 4 both support 2048x2048 textures. Most new games will go beyond the 256 x 256 texture limit such as Quake III and will perform better on the TNT2. The Voodoo3 will have to resize these textures, which takes time and also means a loss in image quality. Be that as it may the Voodoo3 is a good performer, and the cards are available at a reasonable price and with the added features of hardware assisted DVD playback using Microsoft's DirectShow, a major contender in the 2D graphics and 3D accelerator market.

3Dfx Voodoo 3

support the Glide API, Direct3D and OpenGL. Unfortunately the Voodoo3 can't accelerate in a window yet, but an upcoming OpenGL ICD should alleviate this. A big concern regarding the Voodoo3 is its inability to render at 32-bit and still only outputs 16-bit. This is a definite drawback when compared to the other cards on the market, [illegible] quality on the TNT2 and Savage 4 is simply clear.

Another drawback is that even though the Voodoo3 ships AGP models the card still doesn't make use of AGP texturing and rather only sport a 300MHz RAMDAC and is has a slightly lower refresh rate of 60Hz when compared to the Voodoo3 3000's refresh rate of 2048x1536. This isn't that a big problem since most people don't have monitors that [illegible]

Currently being hailed by a lot of people as the new King of Hill in the 3D world, nVidia has proven that they can make fast graphics chipsets and still maintain the image quality without any washout look to games that were evident on the Voodoo2 cards. What made their cards even more attractive is the TNT's ability to do 2D [illegible] as well as 3D acceleration and use [illegible]

The new TNT2 follows on the footsteps of its predecessor and continues to support a 2D/3D solution and even has support for AGP 4x. The TNT2 has lived up to expectations and boasts some of the highest frame rates out there, of course they are still outsourcing the chips to card manufacturers so you can get a TNT2 based card from your favourite manufacturer, such as Creative Labs and Diamond Multimedia or [illegible]

The TNT2 [illegible]

nVidia TNT 2

support such high resolutions anyway, so if you are not a graphics artist this shouldn't be major [illegible]

Unlike the Voodoo3 cards, due to the [illegible] manufacturers, the cards are shipping in a range of different clock speeds. Right from the Ultras which is 180MHz + and the normal TNT2 which sit around the 145MHz + mark. This makes comparison a little tricky due to the differences in speed. You can always overclock the cards but I might void your warranty, therefore we decided to stick [illegible] the cards default speed for benchmarking purposes since most people stay away from overclocking. The advantages of the TNT2 are obvious. The card can render at 32 bit and maintain a good frame rate besides supporting large textures with a texture limit of 2048x2048. These give the TNT2 an advantage in image [illegible] Voodoo3 but [illegible] texture compression, it does however have a lower frame rate. As its predecessor the TNT supports the OpenGL and Direct3D APIs for acceleration, but unfortunately its main drawback of the TNT2 is still the inability to [illegible] legacy games that only provide accel[illegible] Glide API. As with the Voodoo3 the TNT2 also supports hardware assisted DVD playback and also has the ability to output to a TV. Currently there are 16MB and 32MB cards shipping with the TNT2 chipset but as of yet only the 32MB version have been available in SA. This might explain the more expensive nature of the TNT2 cards in SA, generally being more expensive than the Voodoo3.

The TNT2 is the best all round card of the bunch giving lesser FPS than the Voodoo3 but better image quality. On the other hand it gives more FPS than the Savage 4 but has lesser image quality. The TNT2 is well balanced in both areas and will make the necessity of upgrading last a little longer. This would be my choice of 3D [illegible] if I had to make a [illegible] decision based on the balance of FPS and image quality.

The [illegible] manufacturer of the bunch, it took them a while to develop a graphics card that can compete with the likes of nVidia and 3Dfx. The previous Savage didn't do too well for S3 and they hope to impress everyone with the new Savage 4. Their latest additional to the market, it might not board the highest FPS, but it certainly has the best image quality in the [illegible] board. The Quake 3 test version looks absolutely marvellous, the image is very clear and the [illegible] vivid and even Quake II looks [illegible] a bit better [illegible] textures [illegible] to the game.

Same as with the TNT2 and Voodoo3 the Savage 4 is a 2D/3D-display solution [illegible] with a 400MHz RAMDAC which [illegible] lesser resolutions of 1920x1200 at 60Hz when compared to the Voodoo3's refresh rate of 2048x1536. This isn't that a big problem since most people don't have monitors that [illegible]

S3 Savage 4

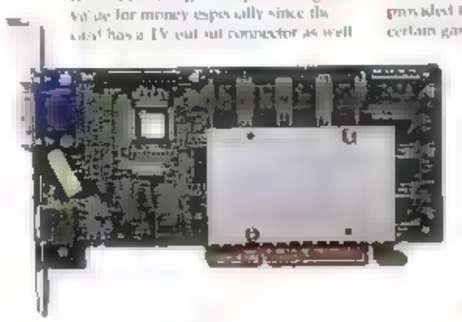
[illegible] games support all the API[illegible]

The Savage 4 is another chipset capable of [illegible] at 32 bit but getting it a slight [illegible] the Voodoo3 falls at [illegible] that S3 was more [illegible] quality than performance [illegible] bites. The amazing [illegible] S3TC which is [illegible] supported by DirectX since its inception even though games only now appear to be taking advantage of it.

The main advantage in favour of the Savage 4 is its incredible image quality made possible by S3TC from S3 and supported by DirectX 6. This gives gamers the chance to view almost photo real[illegible] Well at [illegible] as close as [illegible] at below 30 FPS at higher resolutions S3TC is what makes the Savage [illegible] due to the immense difference in picture quality when looking at other 3D cards. If quality is more important than FPS, I would wholeheartedly recommend a Savage 4 card but unfortunately its FPS is the lowest of the batch. The frame rates aren't that bad when compared to the old Voodoo 1, but with future [illegible] gamers it is running on the shallow end. [illegible] does make the card a little more attractive though [illegible]

NEXT GENERATION 3D CARD ROUND-UP

This card walks away with our editor's [illegible] First [illegible] offers very fast frame rates for today's games and comes with a full version of Unreal, FIFA 99 and a Descent 3 level sampler. Four games [illegible] buying a card, especially if you don't already have them. Most of all [illegible] the card retails at R 999.00 making it exceptionally good value for money especially since the card has a TV out out connector as well [illegible] watch a TV [illegible] TV [illegible] around, plug in the [illegible] and you install the drivers. You also have to install the Mini-Driver that are provided to install certain games. Once again I have to warn you about the texture limitations on the Voodoo3: any 3D scene with 16MB+ textures brings the card to a crawl, so while it might be the best buy now you will probably have to upgrade again if 3dfx doesn't find a work around for this problem. The card comes with a 10-year limited warranty and is distributed by Memtek.

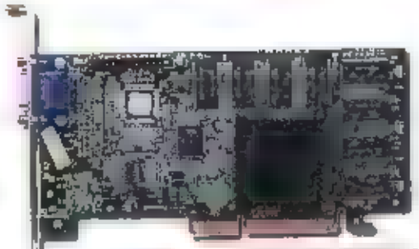


Pro's: Excellent Frame Rates, Full Game Extras, Competitive Price, 10-Year Warranty

Con's: Texture Limitations, No AGP Texturing, No 32-bit Rendering

R 1599.00 RRP.
Memtek Component Distribution
(011) 789-3718
www.3dfx.com

with a sampler CD from E dos Interactive



Pros: Good Consumer Card, 10-Year Warranty, Competitive Price

Cons: No Extras, No AGP Texturing, No 32-bit Rendering

83

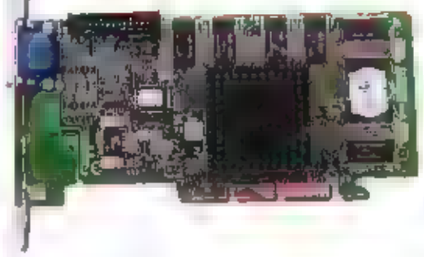
R 1150.00 (RRP)
Memtek Component Distribution
(011) 789-3718
www.3dfx.com

Pros: Excellent Frame Rates, 32 MB Memory, AGP 2x & 4x, 2048x2048 Textures

Cons: No Extra Games, Most Expensive Card

R 2599.00 (RRP)
Multimedia Warehouse
(011) 315-1000
www.creativelabs.com

Diamond Viper V770 OEM

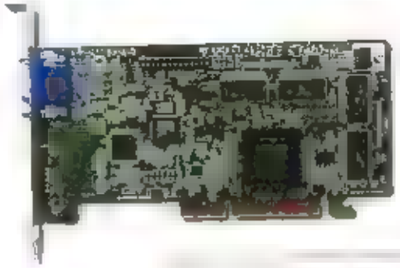


Pros: Affordable, Favourable Performance, 32-bit Rendering

Cons: No Extras, No Box, Jumper Settings

83

R 1150.00 (RRP)
Cyberdyne Systems
(011) 327-0237
www.cyberdyne.co.za



Pros: Excellent Image Quality, Respectable Price

Cons: Slowest Performance, No Extras

78

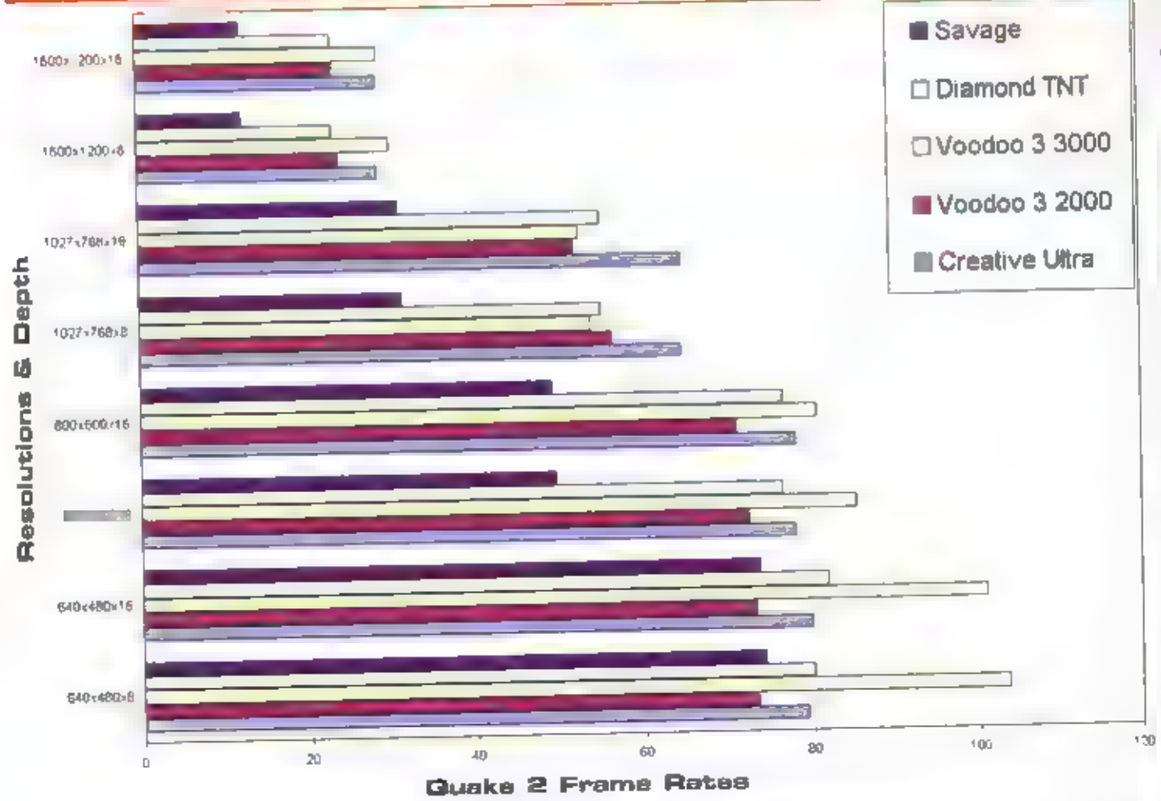
R 1399.00 (RRP)
Multimedia Warehouse
(011) 315-1000
www.creativelabs.com

THE FINAL SAY!

As you can see, currently the top card on the market is the Voodoo3 3000 giving excellent value for money and the only card that ships with games. I must admit that I was quite surprised that the card performed so well in our tests. I just hope that 3dfx will address the AGP texturing and 32-bit rendering when they bring out their next generation card.

I hope this article will help you decide on which card is the one for you, be it a Voodoo3 or TNT2 based card.

But how the cards performed in the Quake II TimeDemo Test



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

THIS SECTION IS FOR PLAYSTATION EXCLUSIVELY. PC GAMERS PLEASE SEE THE COVER CD WHERE WE PLACE ANY NEW CHEATS FOR PC GAMES. THE ARCHIVE ON THE CD IS ONGOING AND CONTAINS ALL PC CHEATS TO DATE. IN THE FUTURE WE MAY CONSIDER PLACING A PLAYSTATION CHEAT ARCHIVE ON THE CD.

PLAYSTATION CHEATS

TIGER WOODS '99

200% Terrain Elevation Increase
Select the 'Edit Name' option on the 'Player Select' menu and enter PUMPZ as a name.

400% Terrain Elevation Increase
Select the 'Edit Name' option on the 'Player Select' menu and enter MAXIMUMZ as a name.

Change Voices
While playing a game, hold up or down, then press X, Square, Triangle, Circle, L1, L2, R1, or R2 to increase or decrease the pitch of the comments made.

Exploding Range Carts
When you start the game, proceed to the Practice Facility screen and select 'Driving'. Once you see the range cart, try and hit it three times to watch in burn in all of its glory.

Flat Terrain
Select the 'Edit Name' option on the 'Player Select' menu and enter OLD_SCHOOL as a name.

South Park Video
There's a five-minute South Park Christmas episode on this PSX CD. Place it in your computer and look for a file called zadummy.dat - open it in 'movie player'. The South Park episode is called "The Spirit of Christmas", which was originally intended to be a greeting card for the FOX company employees.
Be warned: All of the swears are uncensored, and technically it's illegal to do this unless you own a copy of the original animated short.

Taunts
When your opponent is about to shoot, you can taunt him by pressing any button. The button you press determines the taunts:

L1: Crowd Cheers
L2: Tiger laughs
R1: Tiger says, 'That was lucky'
R2: Tiger clears his throat
Triangle: Tiger yells out, 'fore!'
Square: Tiger says, 'nice shot'
Circle: Tiger says, 'no way!'
X: Tiger says, 'no pressure'

Need For Speed: High Stakes

Dashboard View
Select any mode, any track, and any car. Press START on the race icon (at the car selection screen) then immediately hold UP+TRIANGLE+X before the loading screen appears. Hold this until the race begins.

Drunk Mode
Pick a car and start a race. Immediately press Up + L2 + R1 and hold through the loading screen. The screen will now be blurred as if you were drunk.

Easier Tickets
Enter Pursuit Mode and choose a cop car. When the game starts, hold L1 and press UP to turn off your sirens. The person running will slow down. When you've caught up to him, press L1 + UP to turn your sirens back on, then pull him over.

Easy Money
After buying your first car go to two-player mode and select High Stakes. It will ask you if you want to save, select Yes.
After accessing memory slot 1 it will ask for memory card 2. Take the card out of slot 1 and place it in 2. The game will think it's a different memory card and will duplicate your car. Now all you have to do is beat yourself and sell the car you won.

Extra Music Tracks
First, go to the audio options from the main menu. Then go to the CD player and select it. Go all the way to the bottom, and there are two music tracks that are turned off. Just turn them on, and you can listen to them while your driving.

Headlights and Turn Signals
While racing, hold L1 and press LEFT or RIGHT for the blinker. Hold L1 and press UP for the headlights. Hold L1 and press DOWN to turn on your hazard lights.

Heavy Car
Before the loading screen appears to load your next race, press START to load the game and immediately after, press and hold LEFT + SQUARE + CIRCLE. Continue to hold the buttons until the loading screen disappears. You will now be able to knock over other cars easily when bumping into them.

Phantom Car
To get the phantom car, enter your name as FLASH. Note that you cannot save if you use this code.

Police Helicopter
To pilot a police helicopter in test drive mode, enter your name as WHIRLY, and then enter test drive. Note that you cannot save the game if you use this code.

Super Cop Cars
To get the Super Cop Cars, you must arrest 10 speeders within the given time limit.

Titan Car
When entering a username, enter 'Hotrod' and you'll get a beast of a car to play with. This cheat disables game saving.

Bust-A-Move 4

Another World in Arcade Mode
At the original title screen, press Triangle, Left, Right, Left, Triangle. A small character will appear on the bottom left side of the screen. Then, go into Puzzle Mode and choose Arcade to access a new set of puzzles.

Bonus Characters
To gain access to five new characters, Beat Story mode in Player versus Computer mode and you'll get Madam Luna and Dreg. After that, play Win Contest mode until you fight a new character. Beat them, and they are yours!

Apocalypse

All Weapons
Pause the game then hold L1 and press Square, Circle, Up, Down, X, Square.

Checkpoint Select
Pause the game. Hold L1 and press Square, Circle, X. Release L1 and a new option will appear. That option will allow you to warp to any checkpoint in the stage.

Debug Mode and Statistics Report
To check the last checkpoint name you cleared Pause and hold L1. Then press Down, Down, Triangle, X. A little box will appear in the lower left-hand corner.

Full Health
Pause the game and hold L1 while pressing Square, X, Triangle, O.

Infinite Lives
Pause the game then hold L1 and press Triangle, Circle, X, Square.

Invincibility
Pause the game then hold L1 and press Down, Up, Left, Left, Triangle, Up, Right, Down.

Level Select
Pause the game then hold L1 and press Triangle, Up, X, Down, R1, L3, and R2. The screen should then shudder. Now when the game is going, press R2 + L2 to access the debug mode. This lets you get weapons that only your enemies can normally use. This also lets you check your rank in the middle of the stage. Have fun with all of the options, but if you add too many enemies to the level, the game will glitch.

Healing
To restore your health, pause the game and press Left, Left, Down, Down, Square, Square, Triangle, Square. You will know that you entered the code correctly when you hear a ninja say "Huh".

Increase Number Of Items
At the item select screen hold L2 then press LEFT, LEFT, DOWN, DOWN, SQUARE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X.

Increased Carrying Capacity
At the item selection screen HOLD L1, then press LEFT, LEFT, DOWN, DOWN, SQUARE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE.

Invincibility
Press start while playing. While in menu, press and hold, SELECT+ Circle. Then press start.

Japanese Dialogue on some stages
This cheat only works on stages 3, 6, 9, 10. During the movies the characters will speak in Japanese instead of English. At the Stage Select screen, HOLD L1 then press Left, Left, Down, Down, Square, Square, Triangle, and then Circle. You will here a confirmation that the code worked. Then begin one of the stages above.

Level Layout Select
Here is a code that allows you to select the layout A, B, or C of the level you are going to play. To activate this code, enter the following sequence at the level select screen: While holding R1, press left, left, down, down, square, square, triangle, X.

Level Select
Select a character, then hold R2 and press LEFT, LEFT, DOWN, DOWN, SQUARE, SQUARE, Triangle, Square at the next screen.

WCW Nitro

All Wrestlers
At the main menu press R1 four times, L1 four times, R2 four times, L2 four times, then press select. Alternatively, press R1 + L1, R2 + L2, R2 + L2, Select. A noise will confirm the code.

Big Hands
At the Mode Select screen press L2 seven times, then press L1 17 times.

Big Head, Hands and Feet
Go to the Options screen and press R2 seven times, then press R1, Select.

Big Heads
At the Mode Select screen press R1 seven times, then press R2, Select.

Bonus Fights
At the Options menu, press R1, R2, R1, R2, L1, L2, L1, L2, Select.

Computer Assistance
Press the SELECT button at any time during the match and another wrestler will come out and help you beat up on your opponent.

Easy Win
Choose the disco ring and throw your opponent outside of the ring. When they stand up, press L2 to make them do the YMCA dance. Keep doing this until the timer runs out.

Ring Only
In the Options Menu press R1, R2, R1, R2, Select. From now on, each time you press the Select button the ring will advance by one.

Voodoo Mode
At the Wrestler Select screen press L1 seven times, L2+Select you should hear a Wacky sound. During the match as the wrestler takes damage his head will get bigger and bigger.

YMCA
While playing in the Disco ring, hit L2. It's fun to stay at the YMCA.

Please send any cheat requests to assassin@nsg.co.za.

This month we wrap up the different races with an in-depth look at all things Zerg, with special reference to the Brood War Expansion Set. We'll reveal what you need to know to succeed with the Zerg swarms.

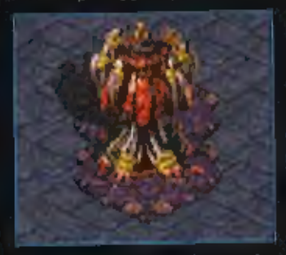
R.A.V.E.N.

StarCraft Expansion Set Brood War

Dark Templar. The odd Spore Colony is useful to supplement your Overlords' detection abilities.

Zerg Basics

The most fundamental concept to remember when playing Zerg is that your best friend is large numbers of units. The Zerg force depends on swarming its opponents with a varied



mix of units. This can, of course, be dangerous when playing against Protoss, due to their Psionic Storm (which is a Zerg commander's greatest enemy).

Zerg have the ability to spread the fastest across a map, mainly due to the fact that the Hatcheries/Lairs/Hives serve not only as resource gathering centres, but also as production facilities for all units, as opposed to Terran and Protoss, who require Barracks, Factories, Gateways, Starports and so on. This means that a Zerg expansion is easier to defend than a Terran or Protoss one.

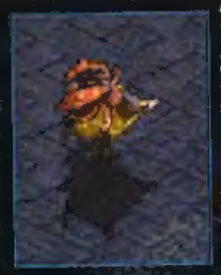
Use Overlords to scout the map early on, but accept that they will be at risk in the process, so try always to have surplus control. The outcome of a battle is often decided by reconnaissance - the player with the better picture of the lay of the land normally has a better understanding of tactical implications, and is better able to exploit these.

Learn to use Defilers. These underused and underrated units can be a huge help against Terran and Protoss opponents, and even against other Zerg players. Remember that Protoss cannot heal or repair damage in any way, so the effects of Plague are permanent, while against Terran it offers the chance of destroying buildings. Also, try shrouding your Hydralisks with Dark Swarm, and see how much longer they end up living.

Zerg Episode VI

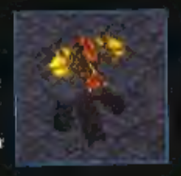
Land Maps

On a land map one should always assume that the opponent is going to try to rush (you've seen this sentence before, haven't you?). Zerg are the rushing force in Starcraft, and so it never hurts to have a small horde of Zerglings ready early in the game, even if you don't plan on rushing your opponent. Build Sunken Colonies liberally around your base, and ensure that they have overlapping fields of fire, so that they protect each other. These defensive structures work miracles against ground troops, especially Zerlgs and



In the early and middle game, your attacks should consist of at least Zerglings and Hydralisks. With this approach, the cheap (and expendable) Zerglings charge in and engage (and distract) enemy forces, while the Hydras take up position and pound the enemy from a little way off. This reflects the general truism that, more often than not, hordes of only one unit type can be defeated with relative ease.

In the later game, include a few Ultralisks in your attack, but don't overdo it. Also, first ensure that your Ultras have at least the movement upgrade, and preferably the Chitinous Plating armour upgrade. These should lead the charge, absorbing the worst of your opponents' defensive firepower, while the rest of the swarm does the real damage.



Place Lurkers at choke points your opponent will need to cross. These units devastate armies of ground troops. Defend these with Hydralisks to keep air units at bay. But more on Lurkers later. In a similar

Lurkers tear up unsuspecting Zerlgs

Devourers working with Mutalisks against Corsairs are deadly indeed

vein, research burrowing ability, and send a Zergling to each resource location you can find and burrow it there. This will provide an early warning system, and allow you to hit the expansion before it's adequately protected.

Air Maps

Zerg have the ability to dominate the skies if they set out to do so early on, and are willing to expend some resources in the process. An early batch of Scourges can leave an unwary opponent stranded on his original island and unable to get off it while you secure additional resources. Use this technique to deny enemy transports access to your

base, or regress from their own!

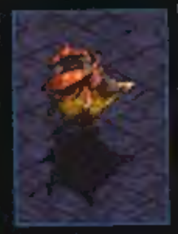
Once again, variety of units is essential. Some Mutalisks are a must at all times, as not only are they general-purpose units that can hit both air and ground targets, but they may be morphed at any stage into either Guardians or Devourers. Scourges are always good to have, and shine in "patrol" mode.

Guardians are one of the crowning glories of Zerg air forces. These monsters can level bases in minutes, but they require air backup, which is where Devourers, Mutas and Scourges come in.

Always, but always, have a few Queens available. These are invaluable "covert operations" units able to scout quickly and assassinate enemy ground troops (Spawn Broodling is awesome against Protoss High Templar, for instance). They will, furthermore, also stack the odds in your favour with their Ensnare ability, both against ground and air units. Remember that, should your units be set upon by cloaked Wraiths, Ensnare will reveal them. You should also use Queens liberally on land maps.

Upgrades

As always, ability upgrades should be a higher priority, in general, than attack or carapace upgrades. Zerglings speed upgrade is a must early on - the quicker the Zerglings get to their enemies, the shorter the period that they are exposed to ranged enemy fire. The upgrades available at the Hydralisk Den are also vital, and will make your Hydralisks (which are Zerg's main ground units) far more effective.



Other important upgrades include the Lurker morphing ability, the researches at the Ultralisk Cavern and all spell-like powers for Queens and Defilers.

New Units

Lurker

This is an exceptionally deadly addition to the Zerg swarm. Place these defensively near your minerals, and watch enemies who try to disrupt your supply train pop by the dozen. Also incredibly effective at holding choke points. Just ensure that any detectors that venture near your

Lurkers are dealt with quickly, and they will live long and prosper. Because they inflict splash damage, Lurkers dispose of entire squads of Zerglings, Marines and Firebats in seconds and Zealots and Dragoons take only marginally longer to demolish.

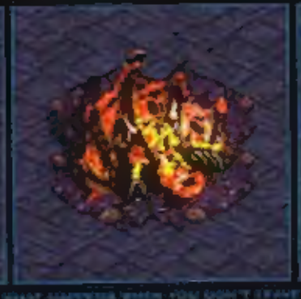
Devourer

This is Zerg's answer to Valkyries and Corsairs, as well as all other nasty flying enemy units! They are most effective in combination with Mutalisks, as the acid spores the Devourer afflicts its victims with increases damage taken by them, and Mutalisk shots rebound twice, thus hitting three times in total, each time inflicting additional damage. Acid spores also increase enemy units' cool down time, thus slowing down their fire rate.

Final Notes

With Zerg, the key is to use not only large numbers, but also a wide variety of units. Bewilder your opponent with mixed troop types. Always attack, and don't allow your opponent any respite. Hit him repeatedly with an assortment of units, and try varying your mix from one wave to the next. This way, should he think he has the answer to your attack judging by your previous wave, your next one will find him floundering with inappropriate counterunits. As always, seek to surprise your opponent and keep him on his toes. Spread quickly and overrun the entire map.

Next month we'll be looking at some more advanced tactics in this strategy guide series.



Disgusting, organic and lethal - the Zerg represent what happens when you don't leave well enough alone

Send Off

It's been one year since we had our last E3 section and now this year we are bringing you a special insert, the E3 Tribute, our version of a news sheet you can keep handy to refer to when deciding on buying upcoming games for the next year. Michael and Warren disappeared into their offices for what seemed like an eternity to make that 16-page news brief, an eventually gave them less time to make up the magazine, so more late nights.

I have to make mention of the Cricket though since Warren went overseas to go watch the finals after winning a ticket at an Electronic Arts Golf day. He left the Wednesday and South Africa lost to Australia on the Thursday, leaving him to watch a final between Pakistan and Australia, which was to say the least, disappointing. Hopefully we will make the final next time if we adopt a slight bit more savvy at the crease and communicate a little. I can tell you that Warren was not too pleased with him after arriving back in South Africa.

Now we all await the Rugby World Cup, and the Springboks better defend their title otherwise it'll be a bleak year for sport in South Africa. As far as gaming went, the last month has been very quiet and very few new releases came our way. This seems to be the trend since we experienced the same strange phenomena last year right after the E3 show. This is probably due to all the overlooked bugs that they discover during the show and try to fix before shipping. There is nothing like the general public to show a developer where the bugs are in a game. Most of the highly anticipated titles have been postponed such as Tiberian Sun, Diablo 2, Darkstone and a couple of others. Even Quake III: Arena has been moved to later in the year, it's enough to make you want to call up the developers and demand that these games are released. Damn. I want to play these titles now!

I think this Christmas is going to be flooded with new gaming titles, making it harder to choose between all the wheat and chaff roaming the shelves. On the up side you might get a game from Father Christmas, who, as we understand also reads NAG, ensuring that you don't find any turkeys under the tree.

As everyone might have noticed, the games that we stated would be reviewed in this issue in last month's Send Off didn't quite make it. It seems that some of the distributors don't know when their own games are coming since I compiled the list just before we started printing. All of them should have been here according to them, but as of yet none have arrived and some will only ship in a couple of months. My apologies if this confused a lot of people, but we are at the mercy of the developers and distributors of these games for release information.

[Yes, Soul Assassin - good excuse, you better hope someone buys it!]

Here They Are, But You Never Heard It From Me...

Kingdoms

This game is scheduled to arrive just before we wrap up the next issue, we left some space for it and we'll make sure that if it arrives on time we'll give it the full treatment. The developers, Cavedog are expecting to do well with this one but we'll have to see how it does up against the rest of the RTS brigade.

Dungeon Keeper 2

Things are looking good for this one for now, we've already seen plenty of evidence at EA Africa's offices that this game will be arriving in time for next issue (we stole a Horny doll). Dungeon Keeper is a highly anticipated release and we're all drawing straws when it arrives to see who gets to review it but we've heard the Ed is a big fan...

Aliens vs Predator

I am actually starting to wonder if this game will ever ship, the estimated release dates keep getting postponed every time I ask. If it does arrive this time, you can bet that NAG will be playing AvP for a while. We might even settle the argument about which is the best character to portray in our weekly death match - the Alien, the Predator or the Marine.

Outcast

We also gave this game an in-depth look a while ago and from what we saw it's going to be something special. It uses a relatively new 3D game engine that uses 3D pixels instead of polygons. We were initially a little sceptical about this technology but the game proved to us that a solid story and engrossing game play is all you need for a winner.

Need for Speed: High Stakes

This review is basically guaranteed - we've already farmed it out to someone and told them they've got three whole weeks to review it. Last time we checked everything was going well except for two sticky PlayStation buttons. First impressions are good and the game is looking really stunning.

Driver

Driver tells the tale of and undercover cop called Tanner, who must stamp out a powerful crime ring or drug lords and other evil henchmen. Players must sell their services to the highest bidder and will experience high speed driving action in New York, Miami, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Coming soon.

Well that's is unfortunately that for this issue of NAG. We always try and bring South African gamers only the best and promise to keep getting better. Remember to keep sending in those e-mails and letters, feedback is the breakfast of champions, till the next one.

KEEP FRAGGIN, KICKIN BUTT, STRATEGIZING, SPORTSIZING AND PLAYING GAMES - SOUL ASSASSIN